TRAILS OF HISTORY AND NATURE

DEVELOPING ECOLOGICAL & CULTURAL MATERIALS FOR AN ECOTOURISM NETWORK

ON THE AEGEAN ISLAND OF NAXOS

by

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Abstract

The Cycladic Islands of Greece are a prominent spot for implementing ecotourism. Greece is facing an increase in mass tourism, driving the need for more sustainable ecotourism practices. Due to its size, position, and biological diversity, the Island of Naxos is ideal for implementing these initiatives. Naxos boasts various landscapes, abundant endemic species, a rich cultural heritage, and an array of ancient hiking trails. Despite the wealth of ecology and ecosystems, the development of hiking tourism is necessary to benefit the local communities and protect biological diversity. The potential of ecotourism and hiking tourism remains untapped mainly due to a lack of accessible information for visitors to help guide and inform them of ecological and historical assets. This project is the continuation of research conducted by the University of Michigan's Naxos Capstone team of 2023. The Naxos Capstone team of 2024 expanded this project and further developed it based on the available research and data provided by the previous team. An addition of nine hiking trail descriptions, over 200 species accounts, and architectural 3D models were researched and included. These contributions will be used to create a guidebook and mobile application for visitors to embark on self-guided hikes. The use of these resources will benefit the local community and other communities that seek to experience and appreciate the distinctiveness of the Island of Naxos. This work serves as a bridge to facilitate a meaningful relationship between humans and the invaluable cultural heritage and unique Naxian ecosystems.

Acknowledgments

We express our appreciation to the University of Michigan's International Institute, the School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS), and the Rackham Graduate School for their generous support in funding this research. We extend our sincere gratitude to the Greek stakeholders who provided essential insights and assistance during our fieldwork, including Mayor Dimitrios Lianos, Yiota Aggeli, Katerina Stebili, Annie Mitropoulou, Yiota Margariti, and Dr. Veronica Kalas. We also appreciate Tassos and Dr. Despina Margomenou, local trail management and an esteemed member of the University of Michigan's Department of Classical Studies. Their companionship and expertise while hiking with us have greatly enriched our experience and deepened our understanding. Lastly, we acknowledge the indispensable knowledge, guidance, and encouragement provided by our SEAS faculty advisors, Dr. Sheila Schueller and Dr. Johannes Foufopoulos, without whom this project would not have been possible.

Picture from left to right: Dominique Valentine, Simrin Dhillon, Peiwen Li, Haoting Gao

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Introduction

Tourism in Naxos:

Global biodiversity hotspots, covering less than 20% of the earth's surface, are home to 80% of plant species (Kougioumoutzis et al., 2021). Naxos, nestled in the Mediterranean Basin, is a biodiversity hotspot. However, it is also a cultural gem and a biological treasure. It is a regional center of endemism, harboring species found nowhere else on the planet. Moreover, it boasts a unique blend of diverse topography and historical structures, including Byzantine churches, Venetian castles, and ancient Greek temples. The island is rich inland, both biologically and culturally, supporting a vast network of traditional stone-paved paths, a haven for hiking enthusiasts.

With the Greek Islands rapidly becoming a world-premier center for international tourism, the island of Naxos (Cyclades archipelago, Aegean Sea, Greece) has been regularly voted among the top island destinations globally. This status has caused an influx of tourists and has resulted in Naxos experiencing significant impacts from mass beach tourism. Expanding tourist development has been fragmenting lowland ecosystems to the point where only 20.5% of the potential natural habitat remains unaffected by touristic sprawl (Krawczyk et al., 2019). However, most visitors stay in Chora, the capital town of Naxos, which means that many visitors, in turn, miss out on 30,000 years worth of human culture embedded along the ancient hiking trails. Besides the beaches, Naxos also offers marks of human history (temples, fortresses, churches) that date back to the Neanderthals (Lamont et al., 2019). This rich cultural inland area should be more noticed and made visible by Western tourists. The main reason for the lack of visits is that information on the local attractions is inaccessible to tourists.

For impoverished and underdeveloped local communities, the biological and cultural richness of the island often needs more practical value as it does not contribute to raising their standard of living. As a solution, community members have aggressively expanded into animal agriculture, which - with support from ill-guided European Union subsidies- has resulted in massive goat and sheep flocks. These, in turn, are now destroying the native forests, resulting in a recent wave of soil erosion advancing desertification (Lisiecki et al., 2022), leading to a noticeable decline in the island's endemic species. Overall, all these pressures deprive the local communities of an essential source of income, forcing them to engage in unsustainable activities such as destructive livestock overgrazing. In order to provide an alternative form of income, attempts have been made to increase tourism to the island's center. Bringing tourists to the forgotten areas could provide economic opportunities for the local communities. Alleviating the need to rely solely on livestock, mitigating environmental harm, and creating sustainable livelihoods. Therefore, the Municipality of Naxos, the Ministry of the Environment, local conservation NGOs, and the University of Michigan have all teamed together to create a plan that centers around ecotourism principles.

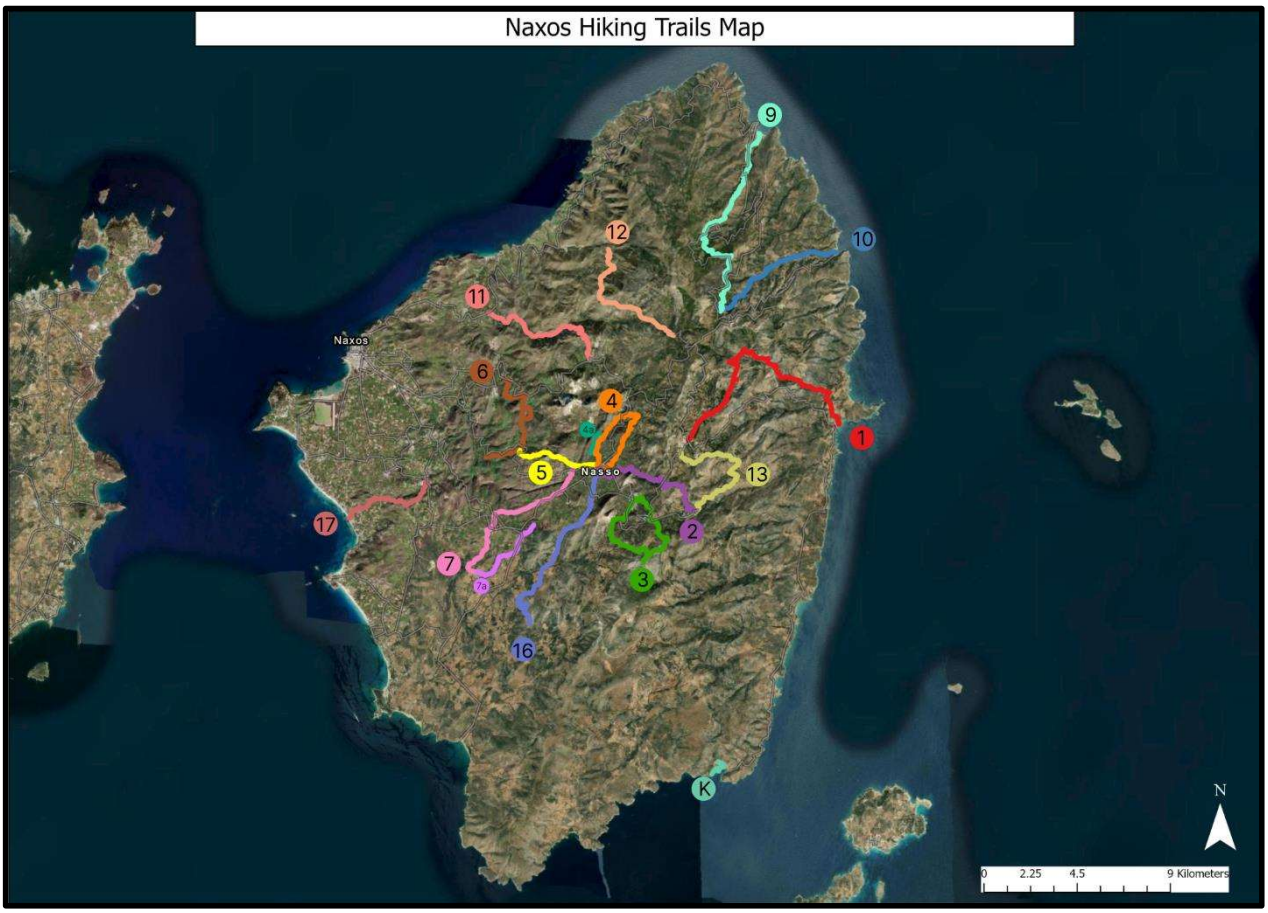
Ecotourism, stemming from the environmental movement and mass tourism, is a form of travel that benefits tourists, local communities, and the environment. The International Ecotourism Society (2017) further defines ecotourism into three subcategories:

1. **Conservation -** long-term economic incentives that encourage nature and cultural heritage protection
2. **Communities -** empowering and enriching local communities through employment, education, and economic development opportunities through tourism

3. **Interpretation -** offering educational opportunities for visitors to learn about local culture, heritage, flora, fauna and natural habitats

The municipality has recently delved into ecotourism strategies to boost tourism across the island, particularly emphasizing hiking ecotourism. This effort involves reviving an ancient hiking network once used as a vital route of village connections. Currently, Naxos boasts 18 pathways, offering a rich experience featuring archeological sites, flora, fauna, traditional villages, and churches. These footpaths show the island's natural beauty and allow hikers to dive into its history and culture. The municipality can direct tourist revenue toward communities by rejuvenating and promoting these trails, potentially easing the pressure off local farmers. The municipality focuses on developing hiking materials to enhance ecotourism practices, including a phone application and guidebook on each trail.

Trail Materials:



Map of all hiking trails

Overall, the Naxos municipality maintains 18 ancient trails, of which 15 are officially marked. Our team focused on collecting data for nine trails (Trail K, 4a, 7a, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17) on Naxos during the summer of 2023. These trails were all part of the ancient hiking network found in Naxos. The trails have a strong cultural significance and offer diverse habitats and landscapes. Each trail has a

corresponding description that lays out essential information that could be useful for hikers, such as culture, nature, and navigational sections.

The *culture* section contains significant historical points of interest that hikers could stop and see along the trail. These points range from historic Byzantine churches to ancient ruins. This section aims to allow a visitor to step through time and see cultural highlights, such as monasteries and fortresses, or places of legend, such as the Mycenaean tomb. Additionally, the description highlights the villages some trails pass through, with a rich history and unique stories.

Following the *culture* section is the *nature* section. This section gives hikers context on the diverse ecosystems, habitats, and landscapes around them. Additionally, it lists the unique native species of flora and fauna one could see on the trail. Each species has a picture and short profile, which hikers can find in the books' species description section. Finally, the last section is the navigational portion. In this section, it breaks down how to travel along the path. With key points that connect to the corresponding map, the navigational section aims to guide hikers along the trail. The section highlights areas of intersection marked unclearly, areas of interest (such as churches, villages, or habitats), and other important points along the path.

These trail descriptions seek to allow hikers to gain valuable insight into Naxos's rich history while highlighting the different ecosystem types and cultural highlights across the island. Additionally, they attempt to guide hikers along trails that could be challenging to navigate. Overall, the trail descriptions attempt to allow tourists who lack knowledge of the island's culture, history, and nature to appreciate its uniqueness.

<u>Recommendations:</u>

Following our extensive research and analysis, we have crafted recommendations to enrich the hiking tourism experience for visitors exploring the Island of Naxos. Our suggestions cover various initiatives, including collaboration with local stakeholders and enhancing upkeep. Our primary recommendation to our clients is to create a working relationship with local tour guides to enhance the hiking experience, continue maintenance, and increase the number of hikers through extensive advertising of the ancient trail network.

To achieve the proposed recommendations, we recommend the following critical actions to the Municipality of Naxos and Small Cyclades:

1. **Build partnerships with local guides and communities to conduct regular meetings to gain information and insights on the trail network.** By leveraging the unique knowledge of local guides and communities, the municipality can encourage safe, sustainable, and interesting travel for visitors. Continue these partnerships to integrate local guide information into guidebooks, official websites, and phone applications.
2. **Enhance trail markers and maintenance to facilitate safe and seamless navigation through trails**, especially in areas intersecting with other paths or obscured by objects or overgrown vegetation.

3. **Expand trail-related information on the municipality website**, including information about local businesses that support and boost the island's economy. This information should be included in the guidebook, application, and website. The municipality should also offer travel information, including bus routes, parking, and car rental information, on all three platforms.

For our clients Elliniki Etairia (EE) and the Cyclades Preservation Fund (CPF):

1. **Translate materials into Greek, German, and French to format the guidebook and app.** Many hikers and tourists encountered on the trail were German or French, making translated materials a critical step forward.
2. **Assess ecotourism implementation strategies for managing and financing the Naxos ancient trail network,** primarily focusing on preserving the environment and improving community welfare through collaborations. A continued assessment of these strategies is crucial for EE and CPF to create a sustainable ecotourism framework that protects the environment, involves local communities, and boosts the economy. The benefits of a successful ecotourism strategy can have lasting effects on Naxos and its residents.

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Appendix I: Trail Descriptions

Trail 4A

MONOITSIA - TAXIARCHIS - AGIOS ISIDOROS - RACHIDIOTISSA

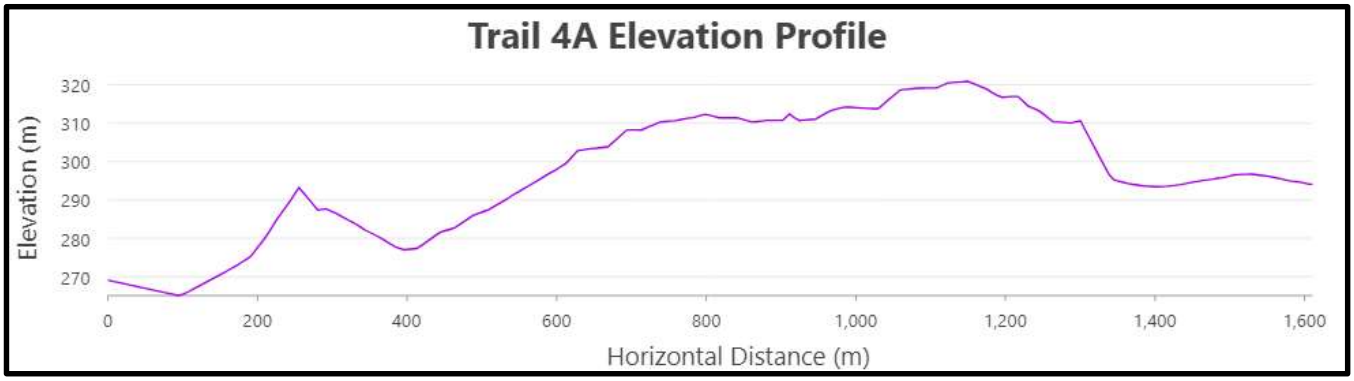
1.6 km || 1h 30 || Easy || Elevation Gain: 79 m || Elevation Loss: 53 m

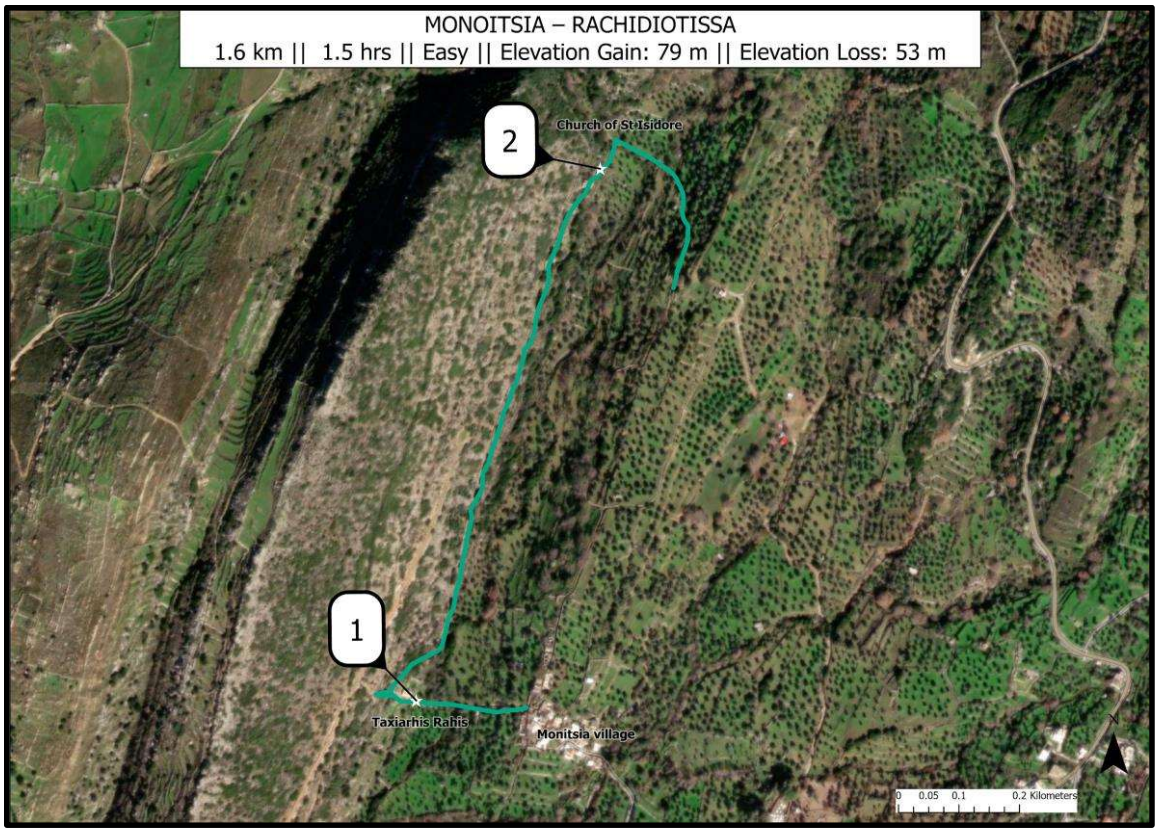
Trail Summary

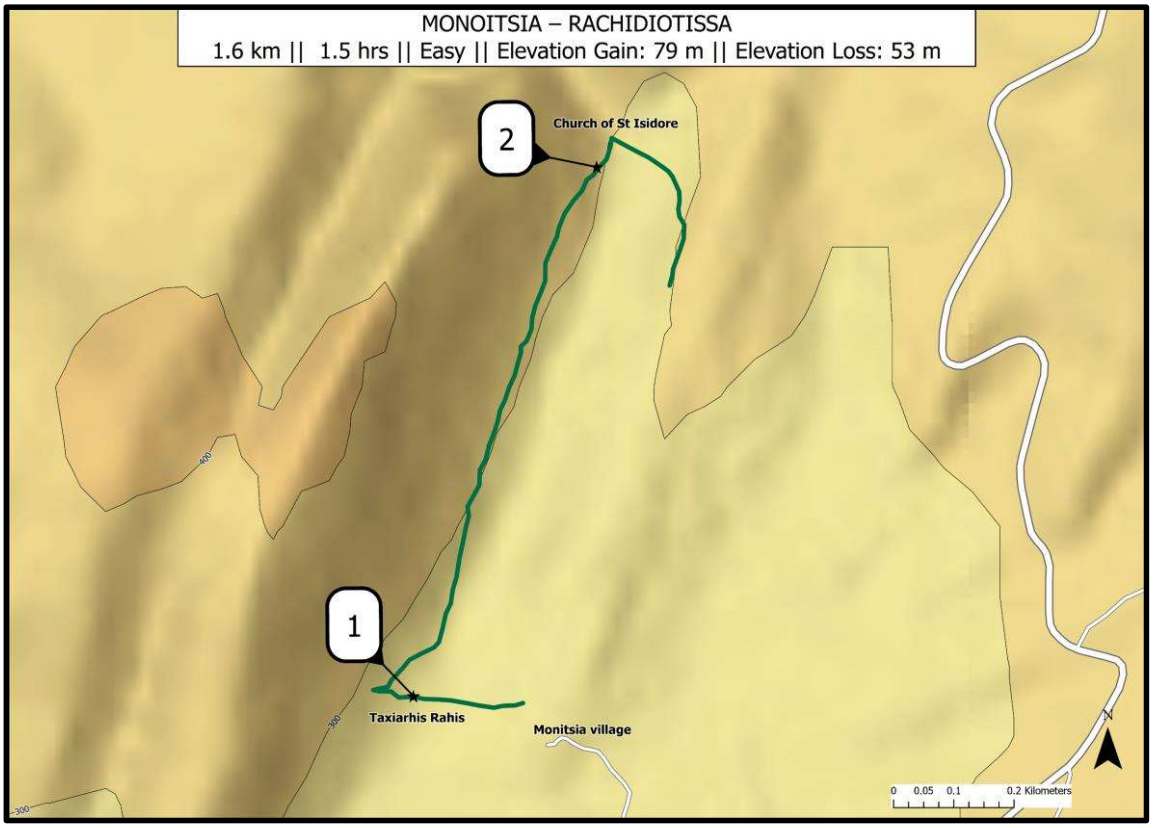
As an extension of Trail 4, this scenic trail offers a captivating journey through the historical landscape of the Tragea Plateau. Beginning in the settlement of Monoitsia, known for its traditional and partially renovated houses with beautiful yards, the trail winds through verdant vegetation and extensive olive groves. Along the route, hikers encounter the well-preserved Byzantine basilica of Taxiarchis. Nature enthusiasts will enjoy the diverse landscape, transitioning from grain fields and olive groves to phrygana and patches of Mediterranean sclerophyllous forest.

Maps and Elevation Graphs

1. Byzantine Church of Taxiarchis Rachi
2. Church of St Isidore




MONOITSIA – RACHIDIOTISSA
1.6 km || 1.5 hrs || Easy || Elevation Gain: 79 m || Elevation Loss: 53 m
2
Church of St Isidore
1
Taxiarhis Rahis
Monitsia village
0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Kilometers


MONOITSIA – RACHIDIOTISSA
1.6 km || 1.5 hrs || Easy || Elevation Gain: 79 m || Elevation Loss: 53 m
2
Church of St Isidore
1
Taxiarhis Rahis
Monitsia village
0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Kilometers

Culture

Byzantine temple of Taxiarchis Rachis (7th – 8th century)

Situated approximately 800 meters north of **Chalki**, across the nearly deserted village of Monitsia, stands the **Byzantine Basilica of Taxiarches (1).** Initially a three-aisled basilica, the church underwent extensive restoration in the 12th century after the collapse of its south aisle. As a result, Taxiarches transformed into a twin-naved church featuring a new vault supported by arches. Excavations uncovered remnants of the initial basilica's south and west walls and tombs in the south aisle's destruction layer. The frescoes within the church reveal two distinct painting phases. Additionally, a layer of wall paintings is visible on the apse, while those on the south wall belong to the church's later development. The collapse of the north aisle happened during the last construction phase, and it transformed the structure into a single-nave church, showcasing the complex historical evolution of Taxiarches.

Early Christian Basilica of St. Isidore

The **Early Christian Basilica of St. Isidore (2)**, partially concealed by a later church, features mosaic floors and other interesting architectural features. A crypt once housed the relics of Saints Isidore and Myrope. Built in the 7th century on an earlier Roman structure, the basilica underwent repairs across various historical periods, experiencing five building phases. The church was ultimately ruined by an earthquake in 1888. Excavations by G. Soteriou in 1918, A. Orlandos in 1928, and the 3rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities in 1981 and 1982 have unveiled its rich history.

Nature

Nigella degenii

Starting at the village of Monitsia, you will travel a short distance lined with dense oleander trees along a **riparian woodland** before the trail opens alongside the tall **old limestone wall**. Olive groves are spread across **terraces** on the eastern side, while the slopes of the mountain reveal sheets of limestone embedded in red clay soil. Most of the trail winds through shrubs and low trees, characteristic of **maquis** habitats. The path also leads through some abandoned fields heavily browsed by goats, leaving only spiny herbs and olive trees. As the trail ends, it becomes flanked again by lush oleander trees, with smaller, rounded stones scattered across the ground.

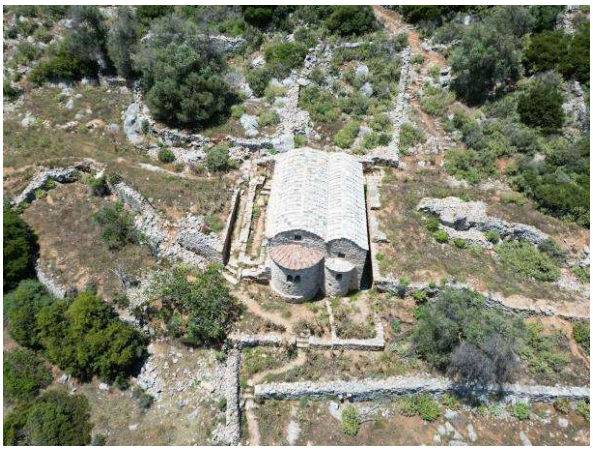
On the lower mountain, you will find typical **maquis** vegetation, including low shrubs like spurges (*Euphorbia sp.*) and Kermes oaks (*Quercus coccifera*), which in the spring and summer seasons draw in a diversity of pollinators. Large olive and oak trees along the edge of agricultural land provide shade for hikers and a chance to spot small bird species, such as the subalpine warbler (*Sylvia cantillans*) and Sardinian warbler (*Sylvia melanocephala*), that are identified by their dark-gray upper parts and light underparts, rounded wings and thin beak. Studding the stony wall are various herbaceous plants such as spiny Bear's Breeches (*Acanthus spinosus*), golden-star (*Asteriscus aquaticus*), and variable-leaved Figwort (*Scrophularia heterophylla*), all of which add aesthetic beauty to the hike and support local pollinators. *Nigella degenii*, an endemic summer-blooming annual herb of the Cyclades, can also be found here.

The composition of the butterfly and moth communities changes seasonally. The caterpillar of the spurge hawk moth (*Hyles euphorbiae*) is particularly striking, with its vibrant colors signaling its distastefulness, which is derived from its diet of toxic spurge leaves. Further along, the path cuts through abandoned **old fields** dotted with spiky thistles and olive trees. The end of the trail at Rachidiotissa contrasts with the bare dirt encountered elsewhere, featuring verdant grass, sparse small shrubs, and trees such as Cretan maples (*Acer sempervirens*) and Kermes oaks (*Quercus coccifera*). The dry and warm climate typical of **phrygana** landscapes is conducive to observing wildlife like lizards and agamas. A notable reptile is the Rough-tailed Agama (*Laudakia stellio*), which resembles a small crocodile with a dark gray body highlighted by yellow or blue spots and a light belly.

Spurge hawk moth (*Hyles euphorbiae*)

Trail Description

Trail 4A is an extension of Trail 4, spanning a length of 1.6 km and requires around an hour and 30 minutes to complete at a leisurely pace. Parking is available in the Public Parking Lot in Chalki, right behind the Chalkio School and opposite to the War Memorial. Before you start, visit the **Epiousion Bakery** (located next to the school), which offers excellent cheese pies and drinks for the hike. From there, you can walk 10 minutes into the quaint settlement of Monoitsia, which also marks the starting point of Trail 4A. To get to Monoitsia, walk past the Koutelieris Supermarket and then turn immediately left, following a narrow, winding dirt road for about 0.4 km. Monoitsia is known for its beautiful old abandoned houses, some of which have been renovated.



Byzantine church By zantine temple of Taxiarchis Rachis (7th – 8th century)

A short distance, about 50m, from Monoitsia, as you traverse the stone staircase and iron fence, you will enter the grassy path of Trail 4A. The culture section above describes the well-preserved **Church of Taxiarches at Monoitsia (1).** A signboard nearby provides more information about the church. Continuing past the church, you will follow a rocky path for a 30 minute walk until you reach the **Church of St Isidore(2)**, marking the midpoint of Trail 4A. To return, retrace your steps to the church, cross the creek, and walk to the opposite side before following the path back to Trail 4.

Logistics

Accommodation

Moni

- Elaiolithos Luxury Retreat - Located just outside Moni village
  - info@elaiolithos.com
  - **Contact Number:** +30 698 608 3477 - WhatsApp +30 698 932 7674
  - Elaiolithios offers visitors a green, Eco-friendly hotel retreat defined by nature, tradition, and hospitality.

Chalki:

- Villa Onar - In village
  - **Contact Number** +30 694 451 02
  - Booking via 3rd party website: https://hotelscheck-in.com/villa-onar/en/
  - This hotel has a shared lounge and garden for visitors as well as WiFI and free parking.

Getting Around

While a rental car or taxi may be the most convenient way to get from Chora to Chalki, there is also regular bus transportation to Chalki. At the time of writing, several bus lines (2, 6) run between Naxos town (Chora) and Chalki, as well as Line 7, which runs from Moni via Chalki to Naxos town (Chora). Bus frequency increases in the summer months: from July to August, the bus runs every day from Chora to Chalki at 07:30, 09:30, 11:00, 12:00, 13:30, 15:00, 17:00, 20:15. For more information, visit https://naxosbuses.com/ or contact by tel. +30 22850 22291, email info@naxosbuses.com

Trail 7A

TEMPLE OF DEMETER - EXTENDED TRAIL

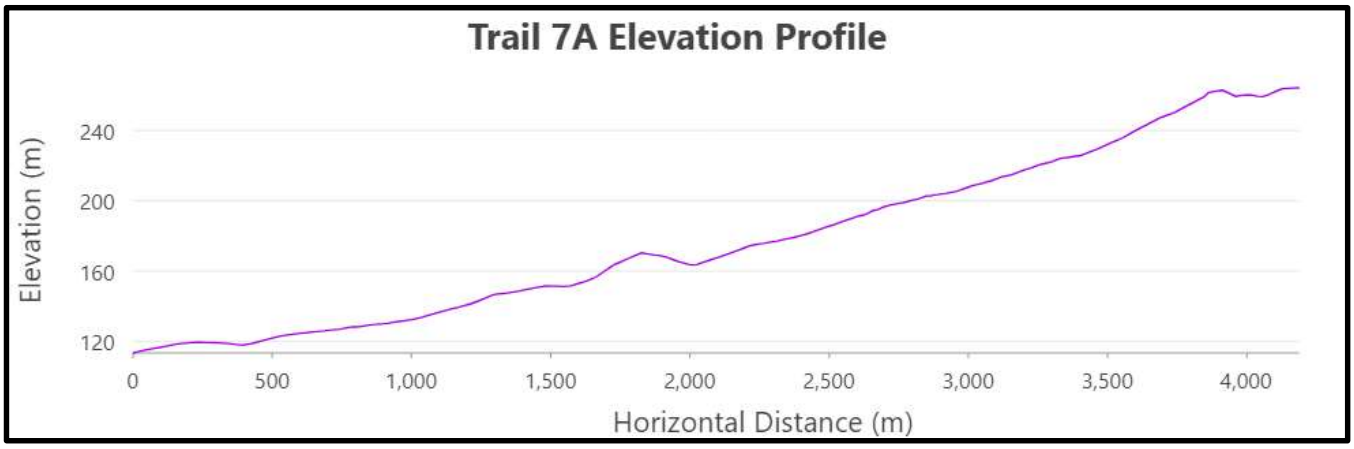
5.3 km || 2h || Moderate || Elevation Gain: 166 m || Elevation Loss: 13 m

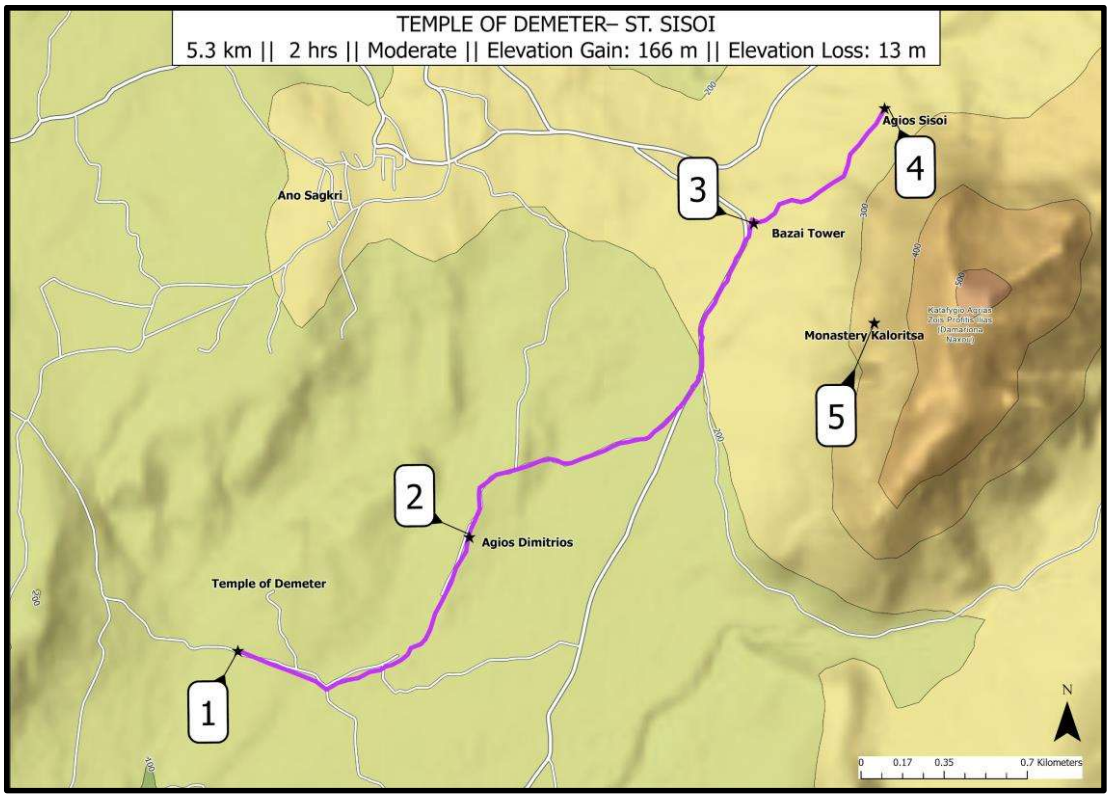
Trail Summary

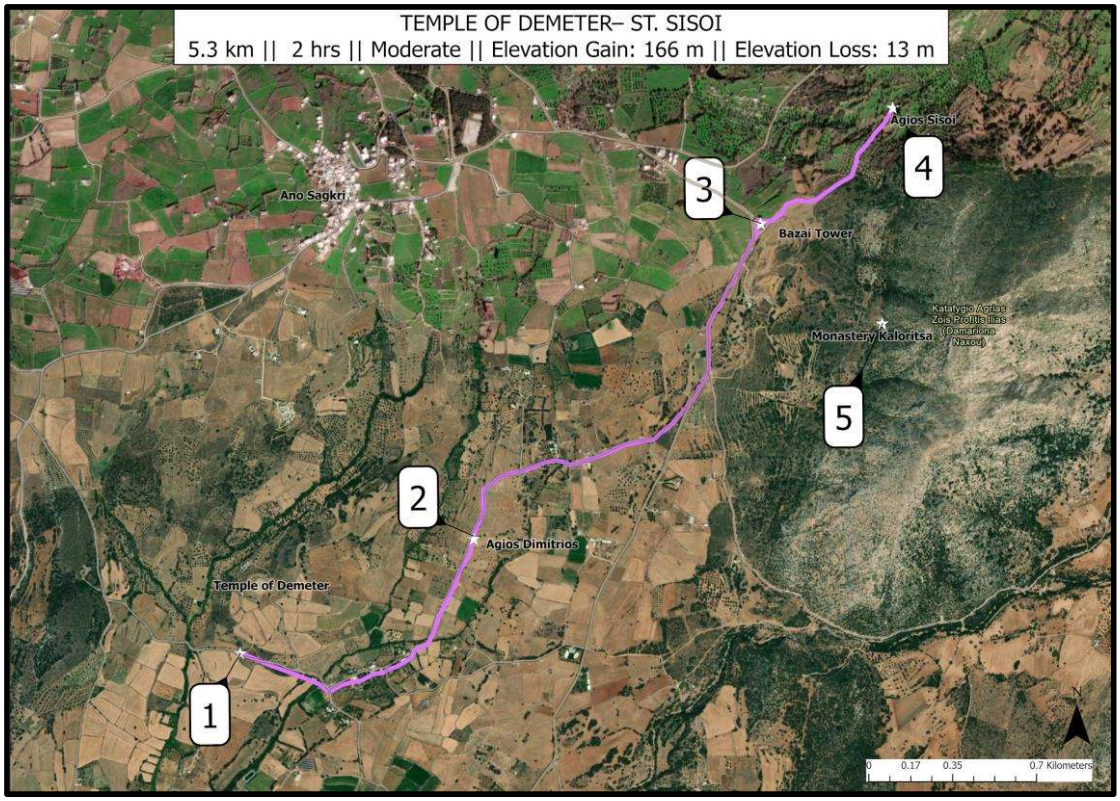
This short hike, an extension of trail 7, weaves through diverse landscapes and showcases several cultural gems. Commencing at the well-known Temple of Demeter, this trail invites hikers into a story of Byzantine architecture and wall paintings. Easy to follow and on relatively flat ground, the path traverses cultivated farmlands, shrublands, and other habitats. End this trail at the Monastery Kaloritisa, which provides a serene space for reflection and meditation.

Maps and Elevation Graphs

1. The start point of trail 7A
2. Byzantine church of Agios Dimitrios
3. The Bazeos Tower
4. The endpoint of 7A
5. Monastery Kaloritisa




TEMPLE OF DEMETER– ST. SISOI
5.3 km || 2 hrs || Moderate || Elevation Gain: 166 m || Elevation Loss: 13 m
Agios Sisoi
Ano Sagkri
Bazai Tower
Monastery Kaloritsa
Agios Dimitrios
Temple of Demeter
1
2
3
4
5
N
0 0.17 0.35 0.7 Kilometers


TEMPLE OF DEMETER– ST. SISOI
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Agios Sisoi
Ano Sagkri
Bazai Tower
Monastery Kaloritsa
Agios Dimitrios
Temple of Demeter
1
2
3
4
5
N
0 0.17 0.35 0.7 Kilometers

Culture

Built in the 13th century on the remnants of an ancient temple, the **Byzantine church of Agios Dimitrios (2)** in Avlona is dedicated to Agios Eleftherios, Agia Thekla, and Agios Dimitrios. It is an important example of medieval Greek architecture. Initially a three-aisled basilica, the structure adopted Euboea's prevalent transverse-vault style in the 13th century. The church has a path leading to the main structure and two chapels on the eastern side. Internally, the church houses well-preserved wall paintings from around 1300, depicting scenes from Christ's life in the main church and the Second Coming in the narthex. Noteworthy figures include military saints at the narthex and an impressive representation of Archangel Michael in the main church. Additionally, a marble candelabra can be found near the area of the altar.

Church of Agios Dimitrios (13th Century)

The Bazeos Tower

The Bazeos Tower (3), also known as "Timios Stavros," is 12 km from Chora near the village of Sagri on Naxos Island. Built in the 17th century, it was a tower-monastery during the Ottoman era. After the Ottoman victory over the Venetians, it became solely a monastery until the early 19th century, eventually falling into disuse and becoming Greek state property. The Bazeos family, descendants of the Bassegio family (family of old Venetian nobility), acquired and refurbished the tower in recent years. Managed by the non-profit cultural organization "AION," it now is operated as a cultural center hosting festivals, theatrical performances, music and dance shows, and temporary exhibitions in collaboration with various organizations, including the Benaki Museum. Admission prices for events may vary.

The final cultural site on this trail is the church of **Agios Sisoi (4).** This arched, one-room church is on the trail before the olive grove. Unfortunately, the general public cannot access this church except on the 6th of July, when it has celebrations and allows everyone. Hikers can appreciate the beautiful small church before concluding their hike on this path.

The abandoned **Monastery of Kaloritsia (5)** is partially situated inside a cave high up on the slopes of Profitis Elias. The cave was originally turned into a church in the 4th century AD. A Byzantine monastery was added in front of the cave between the 11th and 13th centuries. Inside the cave are remnants of wall paintings from the 11 century and a single painting of the birth of Christ from 1619. The side offers stunning views of the plain below and the whole west side of Naxos, including the island of Paros across the straits.

Nature

The trail passes agricultural lands near villages or archaeological sites, including flocks of sheep, cows, and chickens. While hiking up on the side of a wide vehicle road along **Mount Profitis Ilias**, the hiker has an excellent view of the surrounding diverse landscapes, from the **traditional grain fields** at lower elevations to **phrygana habitat** with low-growing drought-resistant cushion plants at middle slopes, all the way to the limestone mountain of **Mount Profitis Ilias** in the distance. On the side of the road, numerous typical shrub species can be observed, including the bright yellow Jerusalem sage (*Phlomis fruticosa*). This and other species in the mint family, such as conehead thyme (*Coridothymus capitatus*) and Cretan oregano (*Origanum onites*), form the backbone of the species communities in **phrygana** and attract numerous bees and butterflies in spring and early summer. Look for a quick glimpse of white, such as the wood white butterfly (*Lepitdea sinapis*) or a shimmer of blue from the wings of a holly blue (*Celastrina argiolus*).

Wood white (*Leptidea sinapis*)

Diverse landscapes from phrygana and maquis to abandoned fields and montane habitats

Slowly, the trail surroundings turn into **maquis habitat**, low evergreen shrubland on deep arid soils, often on coastal limestone. It is associated with fragrant plants like rosemary, attracting numerous insects. In the middle part of this trail, extensive areas of maquis have invaded abandoned terraces. Higher up on the slopes where erosion has exposed the gray limestone bedrock, the vegetation becomes more sparse and is dominated by the Scotch broom (*Genista acanthoclada*). Look at the top of this hill for griffon vultures (*Gyps vulvus*) who regularly soar along the steep hill ridge. In the last part of the trail, as the landscape becomes more covered with olives, hikers have the opportunity to observe various tree associated songbirds like

goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), and great tits (*Parus major*). Large olive trees at the edge of abandoned old fields on the top of **older walls** provide shade when hiking, while the trail is lined with grasses and perennial herbs in the mint family.

The last part of the trail is dominated by olive groves, which have a rich herbaceous flora, especially in areas that have not been plowed in a while. The relatively cool and moist conditions on this north-facing slope favor dense vegetation growth in areas that have been abandoned by agriculture.

Trail Description

Beginning at the historic **Temple of Demeter**, the trail proceeds along a dirt road in an easterly direction. Traveling along a beautiful agro-pastoral tableau with rolling hills, the trail offers views of a traditional farming lifestyle. It is a living scene of rural life; herders with their flocks might cross your path, offering a glimpse into the day-to-day lives of local shepherds.

The Temple of Demeter

Local farm

As you approach the **Bazeos Tower(3)**, the route temporarily runs along the main road—be mindful of traffic. The habitat shifts to an agricultural mosaic with sparse trees, eventually giving way to arid shrubland on the right.

Approximately 100m before you reach the tower, a dirt road branches off on the east side of the main paved road - this is the trailhead for a unique short hike to the abandoned **Monastery of Kaloritsia (5).** It is a 20 minute hike up on a short but steep path. Located partially inside a cave, it offers glimpses of monastic life during the Byzantine years and impressive landscape views. Within 20m from the paved highway, veer off the dirt road onto the slope on the left. From there, ascend the slope, keeping along a low dry-stone wall on your right hand side. The well paved path becomes steep in the last few meters before reaching the monastery ruins and the impressive cave behind.

Continue onwards for about 1 km towards the **Bazeos Tower (4)**, in a gradual incline. The tower itself stands as a proud testament to 17th-century architecture and now serves as a beacon of culture and history with its array of exhibits.

The trail's final stretch, a 2km journey beyond the tower, offers a meditative calm because of the plants and village road view as it drops towards the central Tragea plateau. Right after passing the tower, follow a dirt road in the northeast direction. The area transitions into open olive groves in marked contrast to the open grainfields of the first half of the hike. While this concluding segment may lack dramatic views, it provides a serene environment to reflect on the trek and the seamless blend of nature and culture you have experienced.

Logistics

Accommodation

Tsikalario

- None

Sangri

- Ayiopetra Exclusive Getaways
  - **Contact number:** +302285044342
  - **Email**: welcome@ayiopetra.com
  - **Address:** Demeter's Temple area, Sangri, Naxos, 84300, Greece
  - Visitors can rent a suite a short distance from the Temple of Demeter.
- Kanakari 1956
  - **Contact Number**: +306976388589
  - **Email:** info@kanakari1656.gr
  - **Address**: Kanakari, Kato Sangri, Sangri, Naxos 84300, Greece
  - Set of ancillary buildings for rent at the traditional Venetian Sommaripa's tower.
- Xerolithos Natural Living
  - **Contact Number:** +302286021737
  - **Email:** info@xerolithosnaxos.gr
  - **Address**: Kankari, Kato Sangri, Sangri, Naxos 84300, Greece
  - Suites are available for rent in Sangri for groups of four or smaller.

Getting Around

While a rental car or taxi may be the most convenient way to get from Chora to Tsikalario, there is also bus transportation to Tsikalario. At the time of writing, bus Line 9 runs between Naxos town (Chora) and Tsikalario. However, buses to Tsikalaio run infrequently in the summer months: from July to August, the bus runs every Tuesday and Thursday from Chora to Tsikalario at 13:30. For more information, visit https://naxosbuses.com/ or contact by tel. +30 22850 22291, email: info@naxosbuses.com

Trail 9

KORONOS - APOLLONAS

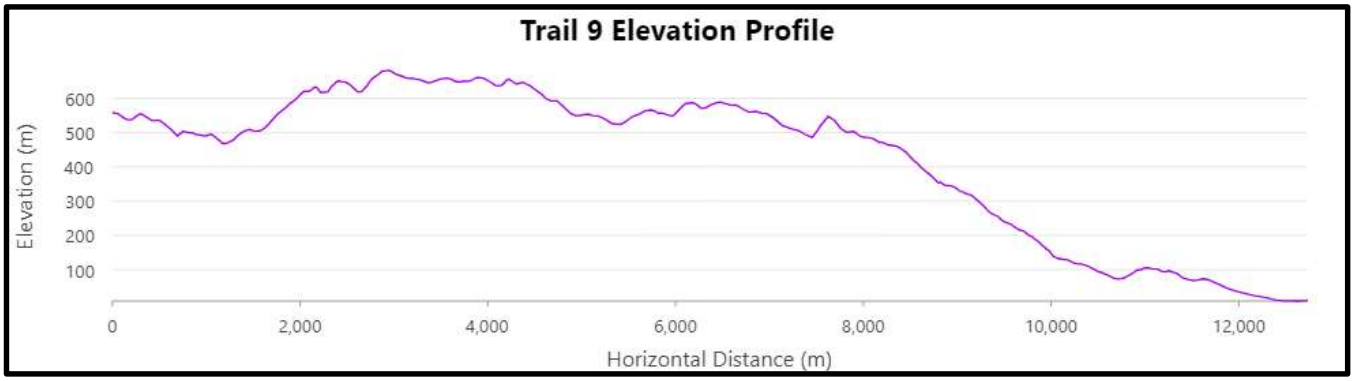
12.7 km || 4h || Hard || Elevation Gain: 513 m || Elevation Loss: 1057 m

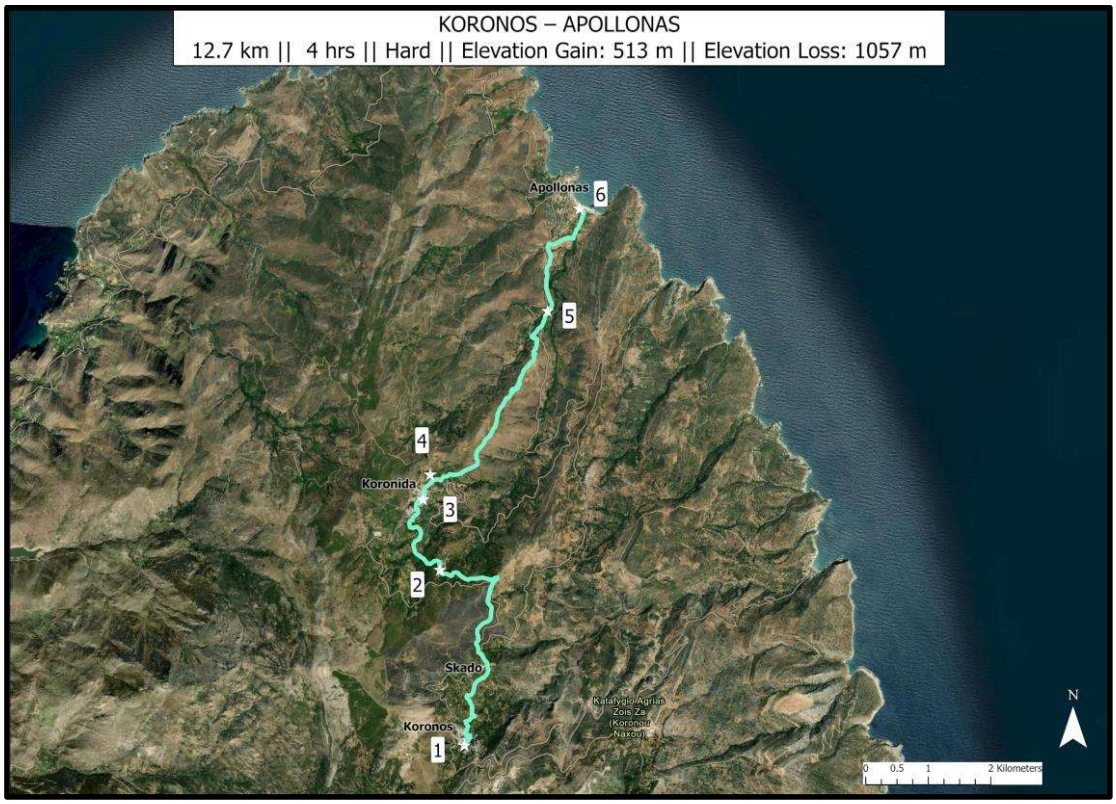
Trail Summary

This challenging but rewarding hike takes visitors through the magnificent valley of Apollonas, beginning in the picturesque village of Koronos. Hikers are rewarded by experiencing culturally rich sites and breathtaking nature. The trail winds through lush landscapes, from high-elevation forests to coastal wetlands. Hikers will get the opportunity to visit the Mycenaean Tomb, which is estimated to be from 1300 BCE. The trail is overgrown with vegetation and requires some caution, but it will ultimately lead travelers to experience the cool and refreshing waters of Apollonas Beach.

Maps and Elevation Graphs

1. The start point of 9
2. Church of Agios Nikolaos
3. Church of Agios Georgios
4. Mycenaean Tomb
5. Watermill
6. Apollonas Beach




KORONOS – APOLLONAS
12.7 km || 4 hrs || Hard || Elevation Gain: 513 m || Elevation Loss: 1057 m
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Koronida
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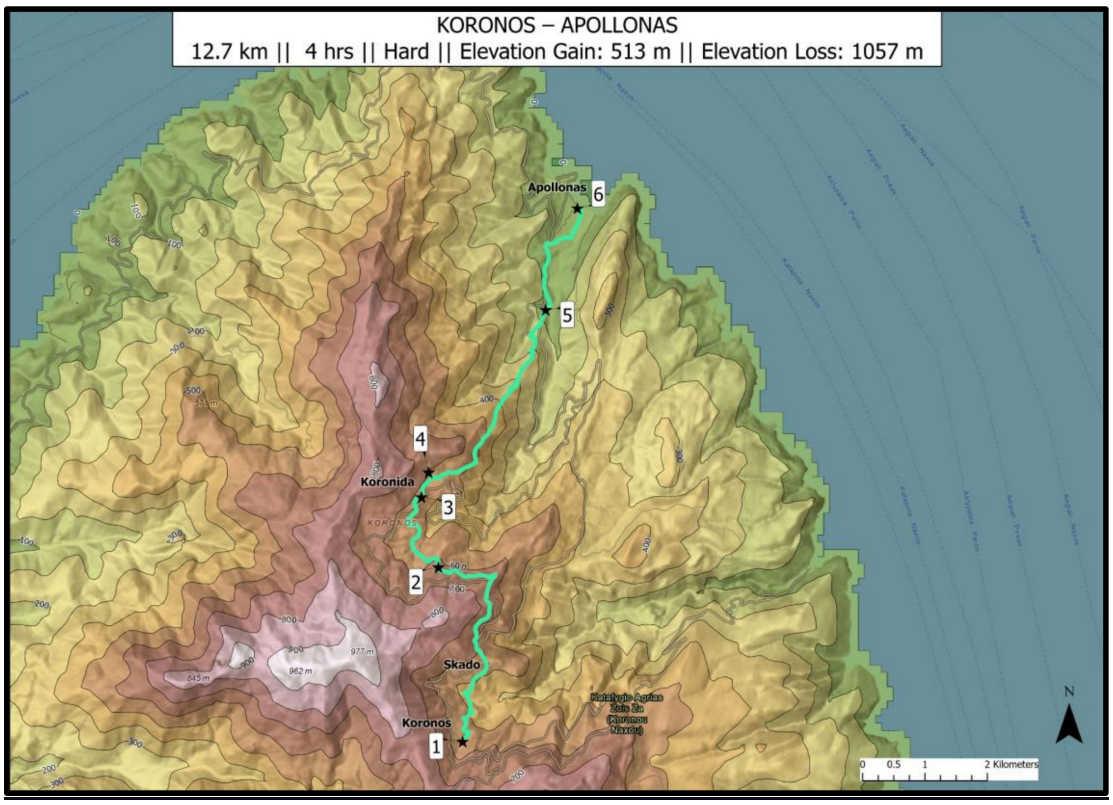
KORONOS – APOLLONAS
12.7 km || 4 hrs || Hard || Elevation Gain: 513 m || Elevation Loss: 1057 m
Apollonas
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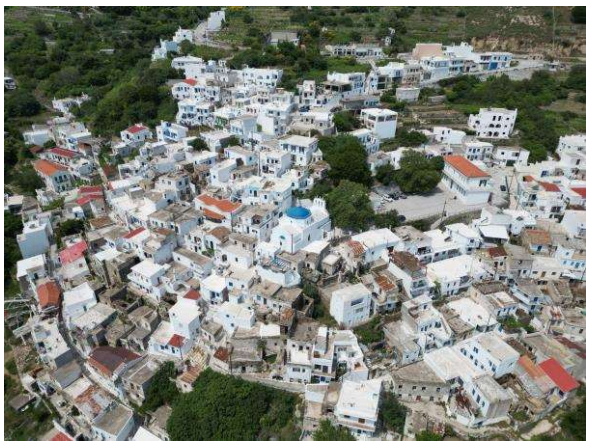
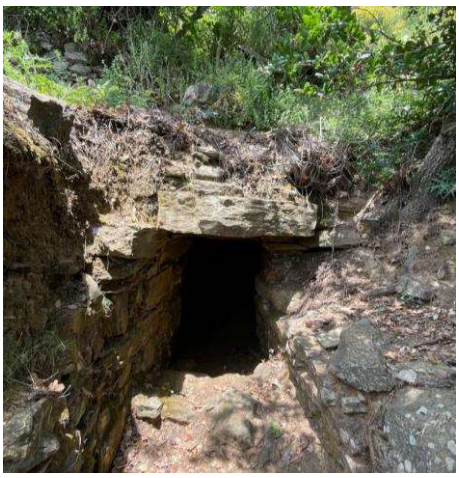
Culture



Aerial view of Koronos

The village of **Koronos (1)** is located in the northeastern region of Naxos and can be accessed readily on a well-paved, though long and winding, mountain road. Recognized as one of the oldest settlements on the island, the village dates back to at least 1200 AD. Situated between Mt. Amomaxis and Mt. Koronos, the village is set on the slopes of a ravine, offering visitors and residents a magnificent view of the valley below. The village consists of seven neighborhoods: Anegyrdia, Kastro, Livadaki, Kato Geitonia, Pano Geitonia, Platsa, and Provolakia. These neighborhoods are connected by numerous flights of stairs and picturesque alleyways. The village houses are built in the traditional architectural style, with whitewashed courtyards and wooden balconies.

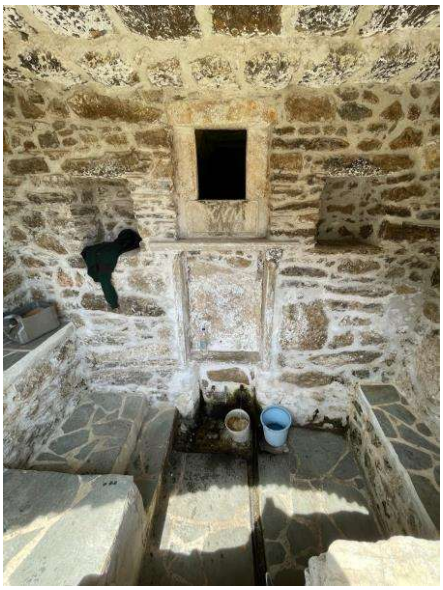


Mycenaean Tomb (1300 BC)

The Early Byzantine Chapel of **Agios Nikolaos (2)** is a beautiful single-aisle domed church. The interior is adorned with frescoes or paintings on wet plaster depicting the birth and baptism of Jesus Christ. Over the years, different layers of frescoes were applied to the interior walls during renovations or artistic additions, with the most recent fresco layer dating to 1270. A little off the trail towards the right, one can see the Church of **Agios Georgios (3).** Dating back to the 11th century, this church also contains frescoes with vibrant colors, intricate styles, and illustrations showcased as a testament to the church's rich history.

As hikers pass through the village of **Koronida**, they will come across the **Mycenaean Tomb (4),** which archaeologists estimate was built around 1300 BCE. Located in the highlands of the village, it is believed that this was the tomb of a local ruler, although the monument's condition does not permit any further identification. Tombs like this are rare, with only two similar tombs found on the islands of Tinos and Mykonos. The tomb consists of a circular burial chamber constructed with boulders in horizontal layers, forming a dome with a base diameter of 3.3 meters and a height of 2.4

meters. This technique, typical of Mycenaean burials, is called corbel vaulting and is what creates the dome structure.



Well of 'Kato Geitonia'

Numerous wells and fountains are scattered across villages and countryside, often seen in yards, gardens, and orchards. This trail passes by local water-drawing sources and highlights fountains in key locations like village squares and near prominent structures such as churches, offering insights for interested readers and potential visitors to the island. The trail passes **The Well of 'Kato Geitonia' (5)** *('Lower neighborhood')*, an important cultural point on this trail where hikers could take a drink. Until the 1960s, there was no central water supply in Koronos. The residents of this village got their water from 4 different wells, one in each neighboring village. These wells are located in Platsa, Kastro, Livadaki, and Anegyrida. Today, the central water supply is located in Koronos.

Nature

Garrigue habitat with sparse scrublands in the first ⅓ of the trail

The first section of the trail crosses dry grasslands and sparse scrubland next to abandoned **old fields**. Along the path in spring, you'll notice the conspicuous clustered Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*), the golden yellow St. wort (*Hypericum perforliatum*), and the pink hues of cist rose (*Cistus creticus)*. Tall stone walls and oak trees near farmland offer patches of shade. Flowers like the common poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*), common mallow (*Malva sylvestris*), and various knapweeds (*Centaurea sp.*) are prevalent along the **roadsides**.

The geologic substrate has a pronounced effect on the vegetation cover of an area, and different types of rock result in very distinct plant communities. This is particularly evident on this hike, where the trail crosses different types of rock, directly visible on the flowers and plants growing at the side of the trail. While in areas with acidic schist substrate, plants like *Erica, Pteridium aquilinum,* and *Arbutus* are abundant. On limestone, characteristic taxa include tree spurge (*Euphorbia dendroides*), spiny knapweed (*Centaurea spinosa*), and spiny broom (*Calicotome spinosa*).

Similarly, the slope's direction also affects vegetation type, as north-facing slopes receive far less sunlight than south-facing ones. The humid, cool, north-facing slope between Koronos and Komiaki supports one of the largest forest areas on Naxos. The slope harbors a variety of moisture-

loving tree species, including Kermes oaks (*Quercus coccifera*), Cretan maple (*Acer sempervirens*), plane trees (*Platanus orientalis*), ash (*Fraxinus ornus*) and alder (*Alnus glutinosa*). These trees have regrown on abandoned agricultural terraces since WWII. The trees demonstrate the potential for vegetation regeneration once fire and overgrazing are suppressed.

As the trail advances beyond the town of Koronida, the lower maintenance and thick overgrowth make certain sections more challenging to navigate. This dense vegetation in the **phrygana habitat** on the coastal limestone is full of aromatic and fragrant plants. These plants are a haven for numerous insects and reptiles. Watch for the common goldenring (*Cordulegaster boltonii*), a large dragonfly with striking green eyes and black and yellow stripes darting about. Butterflies like the clouded yellow (*Colias croceus*), with its black-lined golden wings, and the Cleopatra (*Gonepteryx cleopatra*), with its bright, almost neon yellow wings, add movement to the air. Additionally, wild mulberry and plum trees alongside **streams** near old cultivated lands are fruitful in the summer, offering hikers a chance to enjoy freshly picked treats. The **riparian habitat** is also excellent for spotting more native species, such as the smaller black percher dragonfly (*Diplacodes lefebvrii*) and the Oriental Hornet (*Vespa orientalis*), notable for its reddish-brown color, distinctive yellow band, and exceedingly painful sting.

Oriental hornet *(Vespa orientalis)*

The trail's final stretch towards the seashore features a tapestry of habitats, from cultivated fields and orchards to untended lands near settlements, coastal meadows, and rocky shores. In the last section of the valley, the path gives access to a magnificent riparian forest flanked on both sides by small traditional fields bordered by drystone walls. In the final few meters, the river opens up to a small lake that is an excellent place to observe balkan pond turtles (*Mauremys rivulata*).

Trail Description

Trail 9 begins in the village of Koronos, located on the eastern slopes of Mt. Koronos. Upon entering the area and taking the stairs down, hikers will see the trail marker near a tavern. This path will take about an hour and 40 minutes to reach the village of Komiaki in the north.

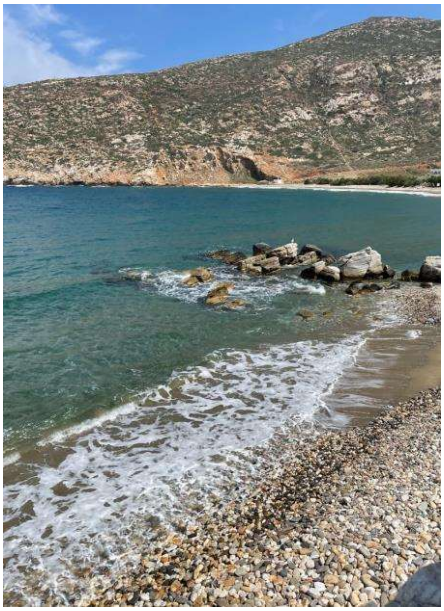
Water Fountain

After following the dirt path for about 8 minutes, hikers will encounter a **water well (5)** at the town's exit. Continuing along the grassy road and following the markers for about 10 minutes, the path gradually becomes covered with overgrown weeds, making it progressively challenging to navigate. Since the road is covered with vegetation full of thorns, hikers cannot move forward and may need to turn back around.

Pick up white mulberry

Once back at the water well, hike towards a prominent signal tower that provides a breathtaking view of the sea and a small island in the distance. After descending for approximately 10 minutes, the road again becomes overgrown and impossible to travel, prompting hikers to turn around. However, hikers can drive to Koronida, another small town renowned for its scenic surroundings and the notable **Mycenaean Tomb (4)**. Following the markers and signs, this tomb can be easily found on the path of Trail 9.

The remaining part of the trail offers fascinating insights into the agricultural landscapes of northern Naxos. Following a creek crossing, the path passes through a mulberry grove, which can provide a delicious treat for travelers during the May-June mulberry season. Exiting the mulberry grove, the visitor proceeds along a stretch of road leading to the trail's final (*800m*) part. After a curve in the trail, the wide pebble beach of **Apollonas (6)** comes into view, where visitors can enjoy, collect seashells, and purchase drinks and food at beachside restaurants. Tavernas along the beach also serve fresh fish and local dishes. The beach has a large section with white marble pebbles and golden sand, offering crystal-clear blue sea waters and a breathtaking view of the Aegean Sea. However, due to its size and the fact that it faces a wide stretch of open sea, the bay is often affected by the frequent northerly winds, making swimming difficult.



Apollonas Beach

Logistics

Accommodation

Apollonas

- Adonis Hotel Naxos
  - **Contact number**: +30 694 794 8147
  - It is located a 5-minute walk from the Aegean Sea and close to historical sites, including the Tower of Agia Castle.

Getting Around

While a taxi or a car rental may be the most efficient way to access Koronos, there is a bus (Line 2) that operates twice a day to take you from Naxos town (Chora) to Koronos village and it takes approximately an hour and ten minutes. The same line also travels from Chora to Apollonas in addition to Line 5. Buses increase during the summer months, and for more information, visit https://naxosbuses.com/ or contact by tel. +30 22850 22291, email info@naxosbuses.com.

Trail 11

KYNIDAROS - PYRGOS PRADUNA - EGGARES

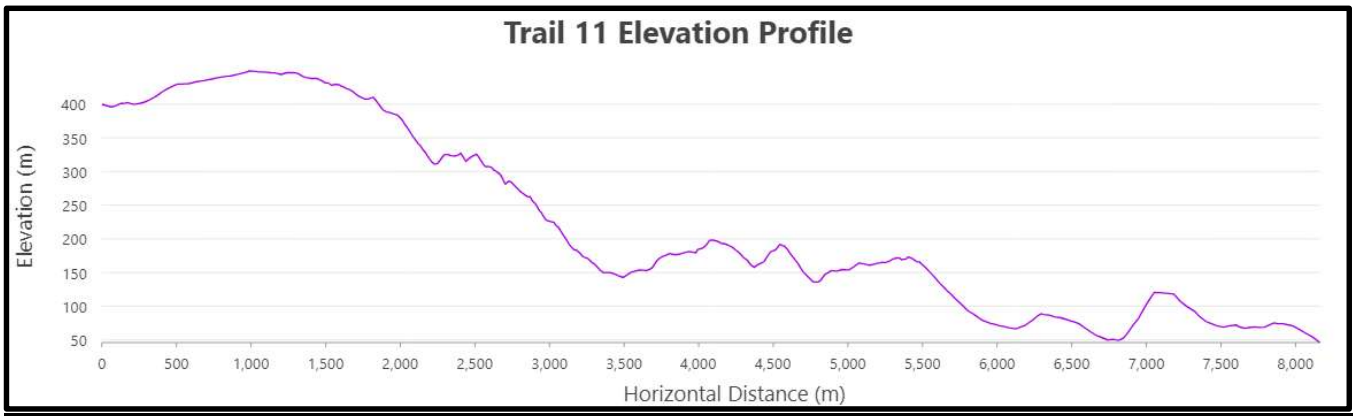
8.2 km || 4 hrs || Moderate || Elevation Gain: 263 m || Elevation Loss: 625 m

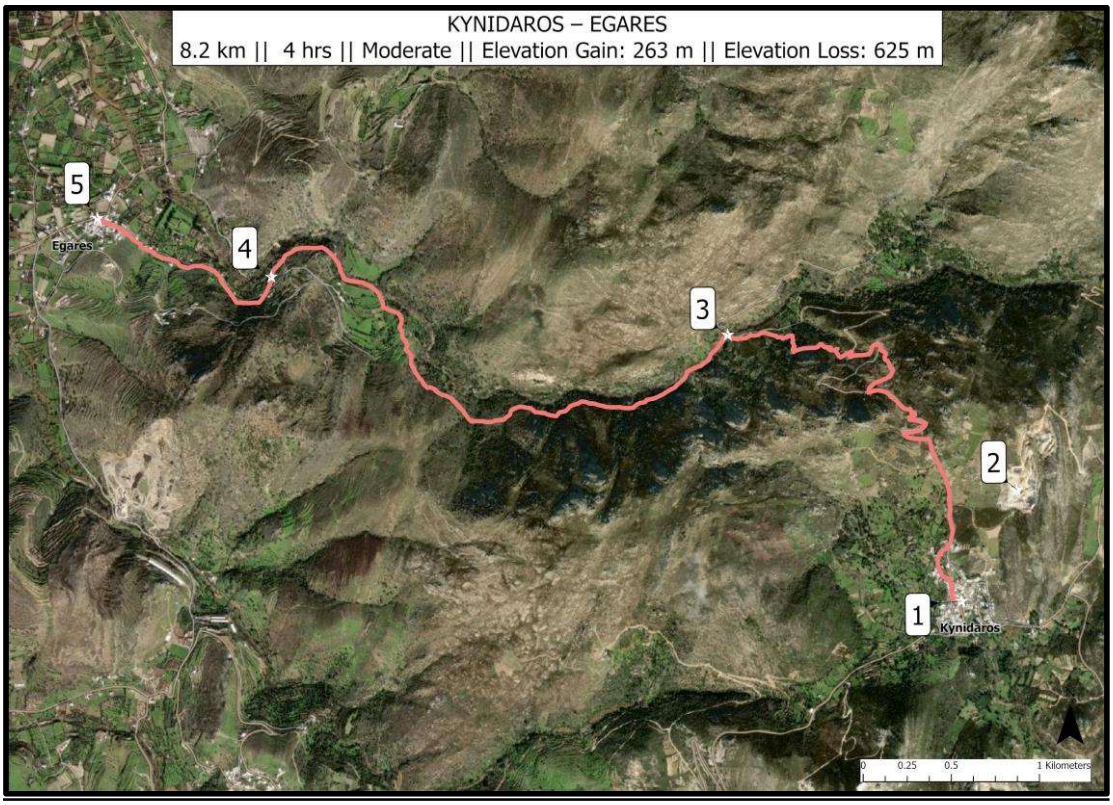
Trail Summary

This moderate trail allows hikers to experience a range of Naxos' varied landscapes. Walking through villages, agriculture areas, and marble quarries, visitors get to experience some of the island's traditional agricultural activities. This trail offers a scenic journey through a range of natural areas, including phrygana, maquis, Mediterranean woodland, and a riparian gallery forest, showcasing various wildlife. Leading partly along the only permanent river in the Cyclades, it offers excellent insights into rare riparian habitats that are otherwise difficult to observe. The twists and turns will lead travelers through varied terrain, offering the island's natural beauty and is a must -see.

Maps and Elevation Graphs

1. The start point of 11, Kynidaros
2. The square of Kynidaros
3. Stone-built double-arched bridge in Halandra (19th century)
4. Praduna Tower (18th century)
5. The end point of 11, Egares




KYNIDAROS – EGARES
8.2 km || 4 hrs || Moderate || Elevation Gain: 263 m || Elevation Loss: 625 m
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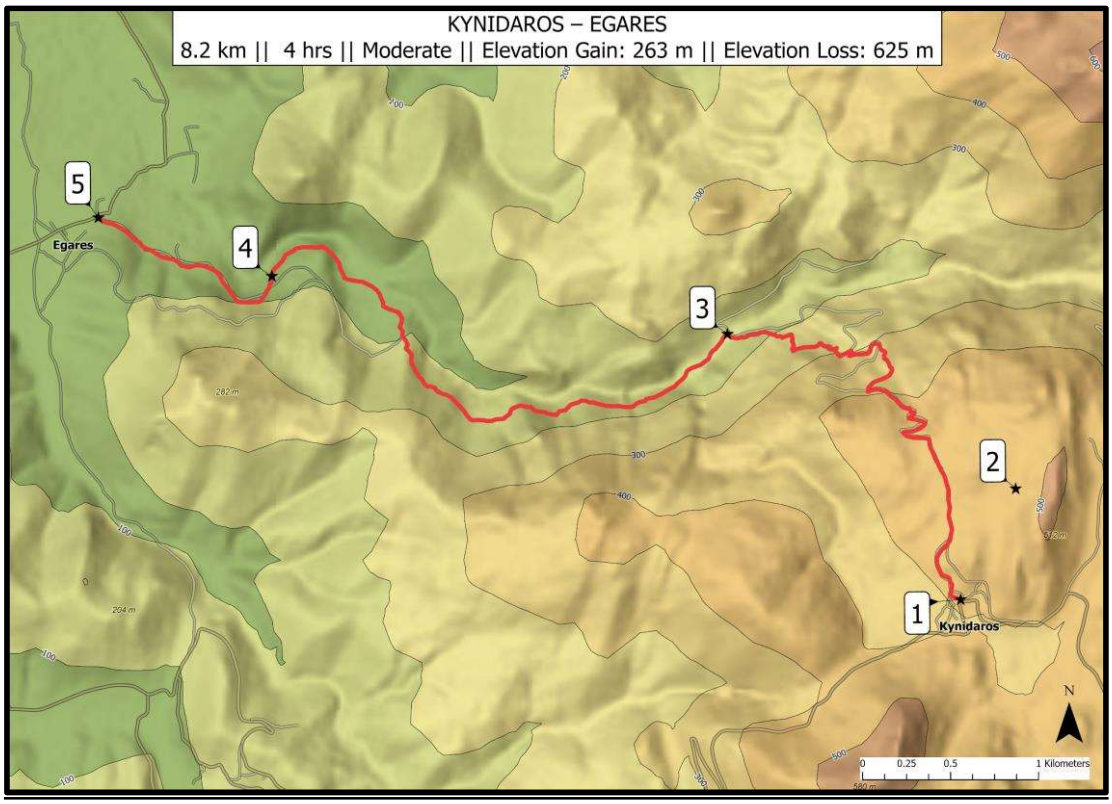
KYNIDAROS – EGARES
8.2 km || 4 hrs || Moderate || Elevation Gain: 263 m || Elevation Loss: 625 m
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Culture

Praduna Tower

Located about 15 km from the main town of Chora, the village of **Kynidaros (1)** offers travelers an experience of the region's rich history and vibrant culture. The settlement's 400 residents rely mainly on agriculture, animal farming, and the renowned marble quarries. Additionally, music holds a special place in the village's culture, and the passion for music runs deep within the community. It is said that babies learn to dance before they learn to walk.

The **Praduna Tower (4)** of the 18th century is located just up from the valley of Eggares. It is an impressive structure of historical significance situated between the path and the river. While the door lintel suggests a construction date of 1787, it is built in an older, fortified Venetian feudal residence style, several examples of which exist across Naxos. The tower initially belonged to Andronikos Pradounas; however, it was later under Panos Foufopoulos, the former mayor of Naxos.

Located North of Chora, the farming village of **Eggares (5)** marks the end of this trail. Home to around 200 residents, the village has been renowned for its exceptional agricultural production. Endowed with a trifecta of productive soil, a relatively sheltered location, and a year-round abundance of water. A rare find for the Cycladian environment, making the area one of the most productive areas in the Cyclades, especially regarding tree-fruit production. During the summer months, Eggares is filled with international tourists and former residents who have moved to Athens or abroad. Featuring historical neighborhoods, watermills, and a tower, the village is worth a detailed visit.

Nature

The trail starts in the village of Kynidaros. Setting out on a tranquil path, you gradually approach the village farmlands. Along this stone-paved route, you will encounter fields with **vineyards** and **olive groves**. In addition to the crops, you will notice **beehives** kept by locals visible in white boxes occurring in clusters and dispersed around the **old fields**. Beyond the cultivated land, the path descends into a shaded typical **Mediterranean riparian woodland**.

Riparian Ecosystem with freshwater

oleander (*Nerium oleander*)

The main species of this characteristic community, which is remarkably independent of elevation, are plane trees (*Platanus orientalis*) with smaller contributions of willow (*Salix alba*), ash (*Fraxinus ornus*), elms (*Ulmus minor*) and alder (*Alnus glutinosa*). These trees have high water requirements, are located at the southern edge of their distribution, and have only a marginal presence in this arid region. Within the lush woodland, various smaller species thrive, including the Bearded Iris (*Iris germanica*) and the Dragon Lily (*Dracunculus vulgaris*). Progressing along the trail, you'll find abundant rich pink oleander (*Nerium oleander*) flowers. This native shrub has been part of Greek horticulture since ancient times and is often found on riverbanks and seacoasts. The trail is surrounded by tall trees and reeds lining the riverbank—a peaceful, shaded spot perfect for a rest. A nearby small pond provides an opportunity to observe the Balkan Pond Turtle (*Mauremys rivulata*), a medium-sized freshwater turtle with an olive green and brown shell, distinguished by the white stripes on its neck. The surrounding **stream habitat** is marked by water springs and large boulders. In this area, you may also spot numerous butterflies, such as the Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*), the Lattice Brown (*Kirinia roxelana*), and the Grayling (*Hipparchia semele*), fluttering along the trail.

As the trail continues, the environment transitions to a drier ecosystem called the **maquis habitat**. This shift allows for sightings of reptiles like the Wall Lizard (*Podarcis erhardii*) and the Common Gecko (*Mediodactylus kotschyi*). Additionally, you will encounter plant species adapted to these arid conditions and indications of past burnings.

Burn site with plants well adapted to the dry environment

Trail Description

The trail starts in the village of **Kynidaros (1)**, the heart of the **Naxian marble quarries (2)** and known for its rich musician traditions. The entrance to the trail is marked by two water wells. Begin walking on a smooth gravel path that will lead you past a quarry and offer stunning views of the sea and a distant Paros island. After leaving Kynidaros, you will ascend northeast along the country road.

The road gradually slopes downhill, transitioning into a stone-paved path that occasionally intersects with the road, offering expansive views towards the valley of Chalandra.

The trail declines, crossing through phrygana vegetation, which shows signs of burning. Keep an eye out for markers that guide you through a narrow and steep section, which is safe, despite its challenging terrain. The trail then meets a section paved with stones, winding through a Kermes oak grove. Mind the overhanging branches as you navigate through the area.

The square of Kynidaros

Descending Trail

As you emerge from the forest patch, you will find yourself on the main dirt road again. After crossing, turn right and walk about 800 meters to discover an old, run-down church. After crossing the church, continue straight and you will come across a densely vegetated pond. This section of the trail also features watermills and small waterfalls nestled among rocks. Walking on the path towards Egares, you will see the fertile area of Langada, and encounter **a stone-built doubled-arched bridge (3)** and a new series of watermills. As you make your way past these watermills and as the river turns temporarily north, the path rises along the valley's southern flank, rounds a piece of vacant land, and emerges just before the **Praduna Tower (4).**

The route then follows a narrow paved road through the traditional rural settlement of Mesa Geitonia, concluding at Egares. Here, you can explore a renovated traditional liotrivi (an olive press), the Byzantine monument of Taxiarchis, the valley's famous orchards, and the shore-water habitat of Ammitis.

Exiting the jungle-like area, you will pass an uninhabited hut and a ruined watchtower. You will conclude your journey on a concrete road that takes you

Praduna tower (18th century)

back to the **Engras village (5)**, marking the end of your exploration of Trail 11.

Logistics

Accommodation

Kynidaros:

- Naxos Aegean Philoxenia
  - **Contact number:** +30 698 367 2344
  - Living space with barbeque facilities, a patio, a balcony, and a sun terrace. Free Wi-Fi is included, and the property is located 15 km from Naxos Castle.

Egares:

- Hotel Naxos Filoxenia (located in the nearby village of Galini)
  - https://www.naxos-filoxenia.com/
  - Email: info@naxos-filoxenia.com
  - **Contact number:** 30 22850 62100

Getting Around

While a car rental and taxi may be the most efficient way to travel to Kynidaros, there is a regular bus service from Naxos Town (Chora) on Line 4. There is also Line 5 that will take you from Chora to Egares, passing Galini and Faneromeni. For more information, visit https://naxosbuses.com/ or contact by tel. +30 22850 22291, email info@naxosbuses.com.

Trail 12

SKEPONI TRAIL

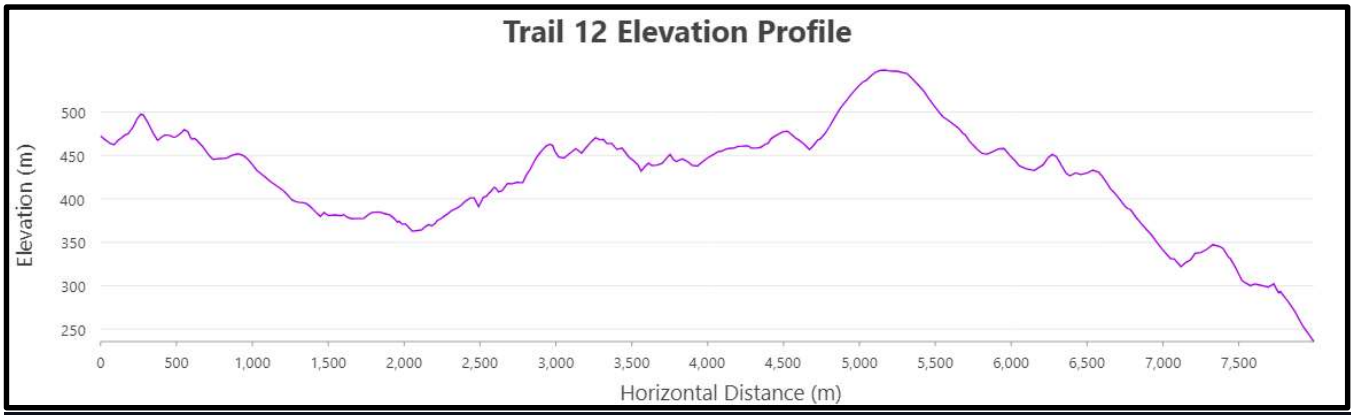
8.0 km || 4 h || Moderate || Elevation Gain: 354 m || Elevation Loss: 603 m

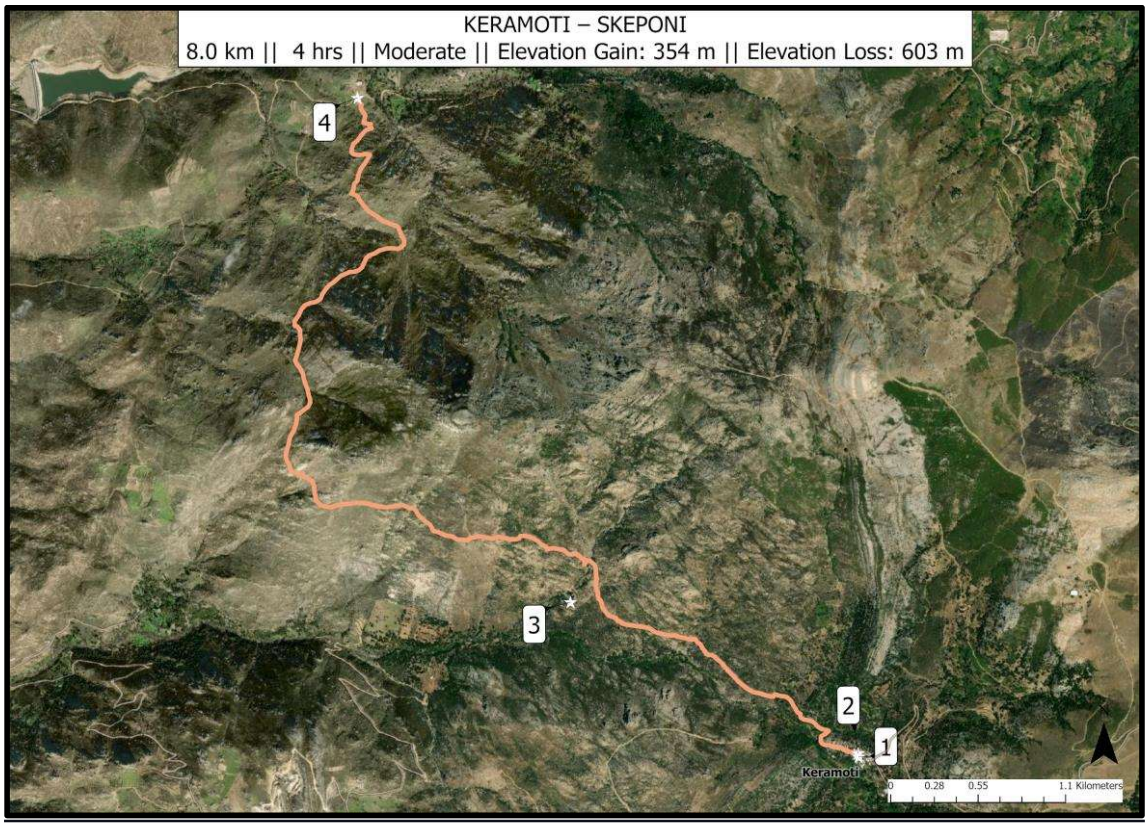
Trail Summary

This moderately challenging hike descends through rocky terrain with olive, maple, and oak trees present along the path. The trail showcases Naxos's mountainous ecosystems, featuring native plant communities and the occasional sightings of local wildlife. Ending at the abandoned village of Skeponi, hikers can witness first-hand what life was like in a remote Naxian settlement. The trail traverses diverse natural habitats and offers sights of a rarely visited part of the island of Naxos.

Maps and Elevation Graphs

1. The start point of 12, Keramoti
2. Renovated traditional Keramoti oil mill
3. Routsounas Waterfall
4. The end point of 12, Skeponi




KERAMOTI – SKEPONI
8.0 km || 4 hrs || Moderate || Elevation Gain: 354 m || Elevation Loss: 603 m
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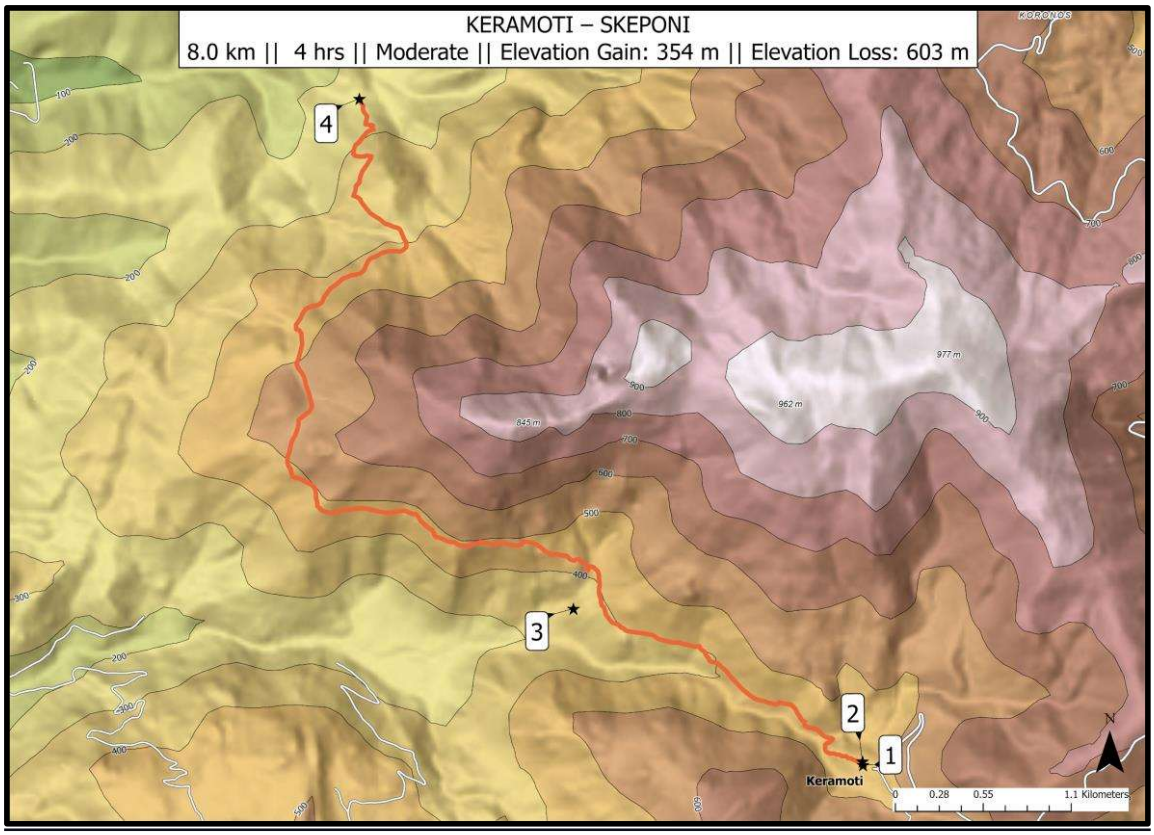
KERAMOTI – SKEPONI
8.0 km || 4 hrs || Moderate || Elevation Gain: 354 m || Elevation Loss: 603 m
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Culture

Located on this trail is the abruptly abandoned settlement of **Skeponi (4)**, which was deserted in the 1950s. Although no one knows what happened to the inhabitants, it is believed the village was abandoned overnight after a landslide. The village was also considered to be abandoned because of its isolated location. This settlement features a square tower, which was likely used as a mansion. However, the age and history of the tower are uncertain; it was initially believed to be in the Grimaldi family and later in the Coronelli family.

Belongings left behind when village was abandoned.

Old traditional home in Skeponi

On the way to Skeponi, visitors will encounter **Routsouna's Waterfall (3).** This once beautiful, full waterfall has dried up and is now merely a trickle. However, as one passes through, one can still see the remains of where the waterfall was, along with lush vegetation.

Nature

The trail originates from Koronos and promptly leads into rugged terrain as it heads westward, adorned with olive, maple, and oak trees along the way. As you travel through the distinctive maquis habitat and transition into the phrygana landscape, you'll observe a shift in vegetation, characterized by a decrease in height and the prevalence of prickly *Calicotome* bushes. The water flow of **Routsouna Waterfall (3)** varies greatly depending on the wetness of the preceding year. During much of its length, the trail skirts the slopes of **Koronos**, which stands at 998m and is the second-highest mountain in Naxos after Mount Zas. As hikers proceed along the trail, they will notice a change between limestone and granite, two prevalent rock types on the island. Large boulders lining the trail are composed of migmatite, commonly found in high-temperature metamorphic environments with intense geological processes. This composite rock variety comprises a light-colored segment termed a "leucosome," resulting from the partial melting of the original rock, alongside a darker segment

Maquis habitat nearby when walking along the trail

referred to as a "melanosome," which remains unaltered and non-molten. The two distinct components implicate the complex processes that have shaped the Earth's crust.

Sparse vegetation mainly caused by overgrazing

The **montane habitats** were once characterized by dense forests or shrublands with higher precipitation than other Mediterranean zones. However, the vegetation has diminished significantly due to extensive burning, overgrazing by shepherds, and unsustainable livestock management practices, becoming sparser and more scattered. While the middle elevations of Nortwestern Naxos receive sufficient rainfall to support Mediterranean forest, only a few trees are encountered in this area because of the history of logging and overgrazing. Many more palatable and undefended plants are consumed by livestock, shifting the plant community towards species like Scotch broom (*Genista acanthoclada*), which are well-defended by spines. Scotch broom stands out in spring with its striking yellow flowers and sharp spines at the end of branches. It is a resilient, drought-adapted bush that covers large areas of Naxos. Among native wildlife, particularly common species of reptiles that can be observed include Kotschyi's gecko (*Mediodactylus kotschyi*), Aegean wall lizards (*Podarcis erhardii*), as well as rough-tailed agamas (*Stellagama stellio*).

Trail Description

Begin your journey at the village of **Keramoti (1)**, nestled at the gorge's base. Take a moment to explore the village's historical treasures, including a **renovated old olive mill (2)** and two nearby water mills, which offer a glimpse into the area's traditional practices. The olive press mill, now abandoned, serves as a museum, providing an interesting cultural experience before you embark on your trek.

Renovated traditional Keramotis oil mill (a)

Renovated traditional Keramotis oil mill

Upon leaving Keramoti, the trail descends into the valley along hundreds of stairs. Make a right turn at the base and walk 50 meters around the cliff before taking a left turn. This initial segment of your journey offers a gentle introduction to the adventure that lies ahead. Continue onwards down the lush valley of Dipotamata. Here, the trail begins its climb along the southwestern slopes of Mount Koronos.

Hikers arrive at Rutsuna, about 1.5 km from Dipotama. This area is renowned for its beautiful waterfalls, which are exceptionally rare in the arid Cyclades as landscape features. **The waterfall of Rutsuna (3)**, despite its reduced flow during the summer months, remains a beautiful place for a break from the rigors of the trail. The journey up to this point is marked by high elevation and spectacular views of the valley and the Chalandra Gorge.

Rutsunas waterfall

The trail gradually descends toward the chapel at Sotira, crossing a more barren and sandstone terrain. This section contrasts with the early segments of the hike, offering a different perspective on the region's diverse landscapes. The trail finishes at **Skeponi (4)**, an abandoned settlement of empty buildings, and long forgotten items. Surrounded by a landscape rich with vegetation and running water, Skeponi offers a serene and reflective end.

Logistics

The region of Skeponi is very remote and largely unpopulated, resulting in very few services available to guests. The closest villages to Skeponi are Agia, about 30 minutes north, and Moni, about 45 minutes south.

Getting Around

Although Naxos does have buses that run regularly, this trail is very isolated and can only be accessed by vehicle. There are many car rental options available on the island.

Trail 13

APEIRANTHOS - MERSINI - DANAKOS

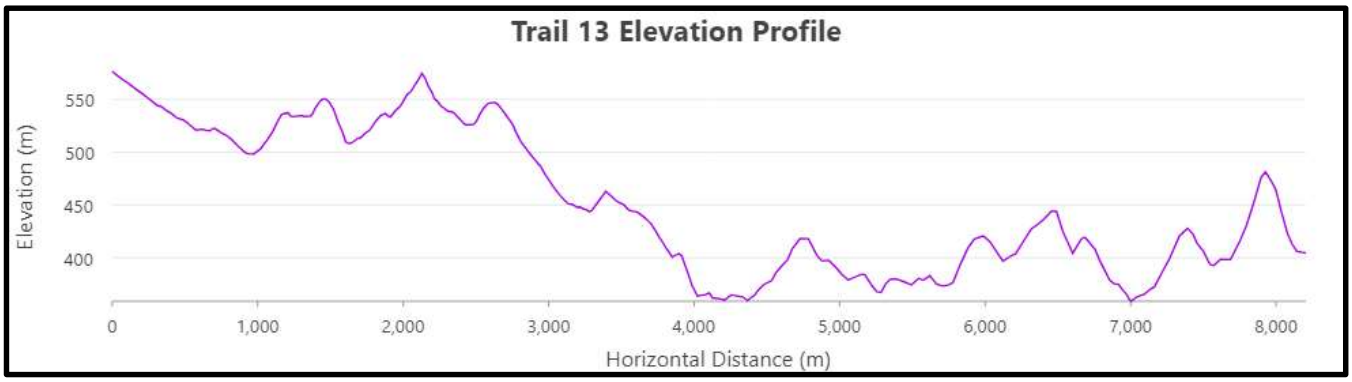
8.2 km || 4.5h || Hard || Elevation Gain: 419 m || Elevation Loss: 591 m

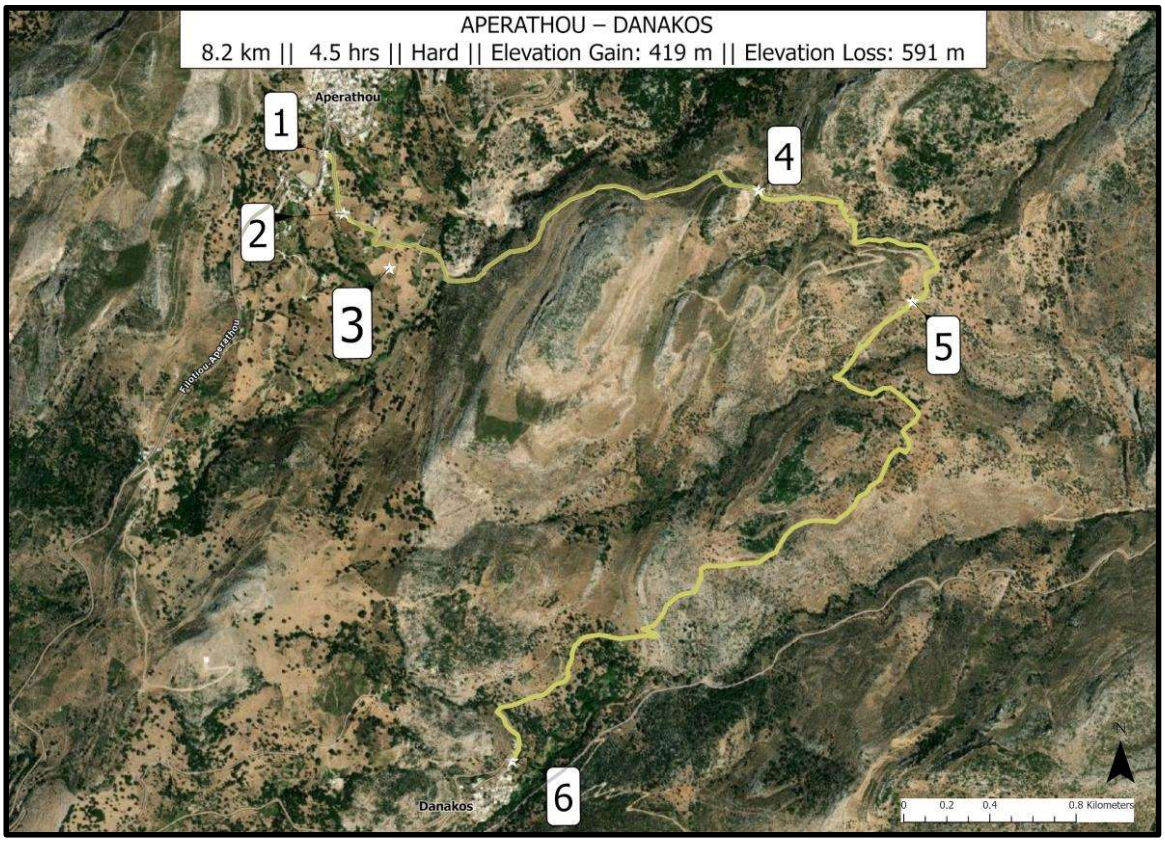
Trail Summary

Hikers will embark on this challenging trail with fascinating rewards including stunning views of the Naxian mountains and abundant nature. Starting at the village of Apeiranthos, hikers will journey through various Mediterranean ecosystems, home to many interesting plants. The path will continue to take hikers through rugged mountain landscapes while encountering significant landmarks, including the Agios Panteleimonas and Agios Pachomios. With a blend of cultural heritage, historical richness, and natural beauty, this trail promises an immersive experience for those seeking the essence of Naxos.

Maps and Elevation Graphs

1. The start point of 13, Apeiranthos
2. Church of Agios Vasilios
3. Byzantine churches of Agios Georgios and Agios Pachomios
4. Stavros / Agios Ermolaos
5. 500-Year-Old Olive Tree
6. The end point of 13, Danakos




APERATHOU – DANAKOS
8.2 km || 4.5 hrs || Hard || Elevation Gain: 419 m || Elevation Loss: 591 m
Aperathou
Danakos
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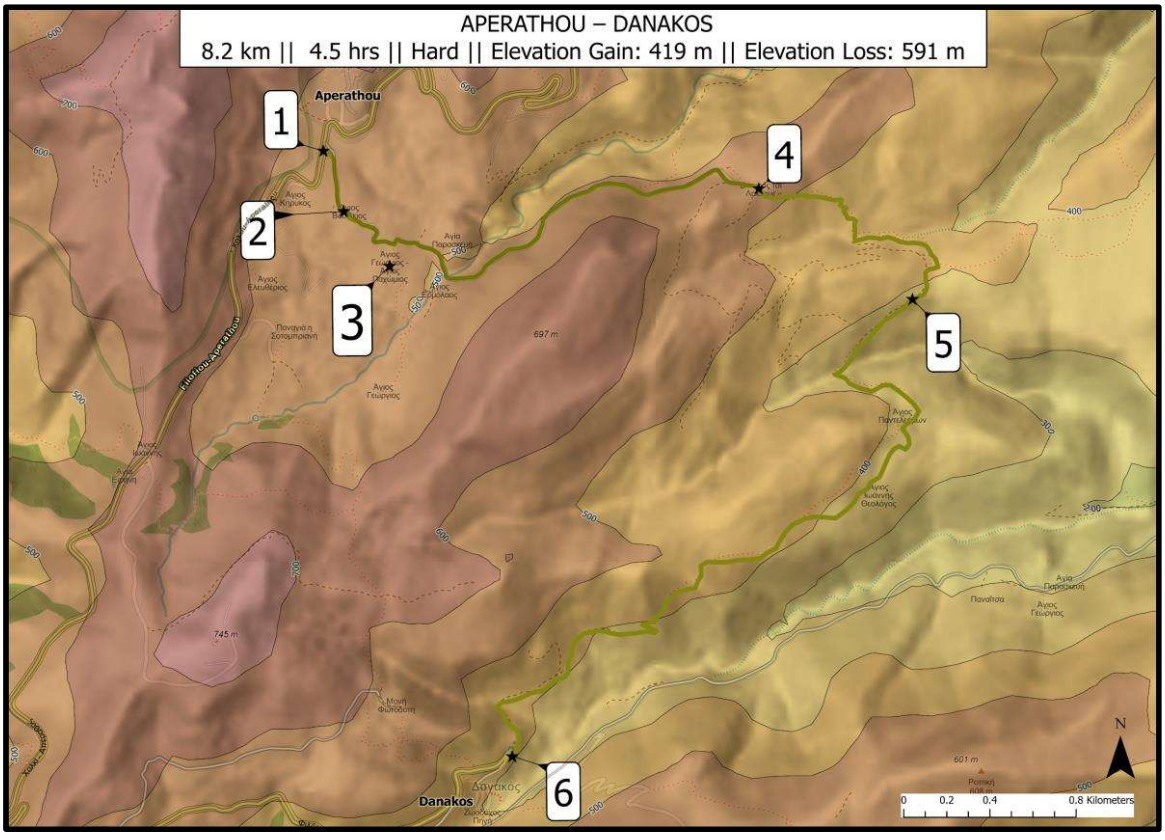
APERATHOU – DANAKOS
8.2 km || 4.5 hrs || Hard || Elevation Gain: 419 m || Elevation Loss: 591 m
Aperathou
Danakos
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Culture

This trail starts in one of Naxos's most important and scenic villages, **Apeiranthos (1)**, home to approximately 1100 inhabitants. The village rests on the slopes of Mount Fanari, providing breathtaking views, and it stands out for its historical richness, housing five museums, including the Archaeological Museum, Geological Museum, Museum of Natural History, Visual Arts Museum, and Folklore Museum. Apeiranthos can be reached from Naxos town by a 40 minute drive through the Galanado, Damalas, Damarionas, and Diloti villages.

Images inside the walls of the Church of Agios Panteleimonas

Traveling along this path reaching Mersini, hikers will come across one of the oldest Byzantine churches on the island, **Agios Panteleimonas (3)**, built in the 7th/8th century.

The end of this path is marked by the small picturesque village of **Danakos (6).** Deeply situated in a gorge at the base of Mount Zas, this village is one of Naxos's oldest settlements. Home to 160 permanent residents, the villagers are mainly animal farmers, stone masons, and millers. With various clear-water springs, a powerful number of mills, and beautiful views, this village definitely requires a stop.

Nature

Starting in the village of Apeiranthos, the first half of the trail features a steppe-like scrub habitat dominated by oaks and rosemary. Hikers will encounter aromatic plant communities, including the Greek oregano (*Origanum onites*) and little-robin (*Geranium purpureum*). As the elevation decreases, the terrain transitions from rocky areas to dry **grain fields and scrub clearings** at lower levels. Here, you'll find clovers, trefoils, spiny perennial herbs, shrubs belonging to the aster and rose families, as well as aromatic herbs from the mint family, all of which support a variety of pollinators, including the Aegean Meadow Brown (*Maniola telmessia*) — a butterfly with brown wings and orange eyespots.

Vegetation density changes depending on the elevation and aspects of slope

The hike along the limestone rocky mountain contours offers a stunning view of the vegetation. It gradually changes across different elevations in **montane habitat** due to human

impact. South-facing slopes, which receive more sunlight, often have less dense vegetation than north-facing slopes in the Northern Hemisphere, suggesting that agricultural activities are more common on south-facing slopes. Human actions such as grazing and the construction of **terraces** to combat soil erosion for more productive land alter the native plant communities, which is a sustainable agricultural practice used by Greeks and can be dated to the fourth century BC. Shrubs favored by goats, like prickly burnet (*Sarcopoterium spinosum*), spiny broom (*Calicotome villosa*), Mediterranean cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*), and Palestinian oak (*Quercus calliprinos*), are found distributed differently between areas that are grazed and those that are not. Additionally, spiny, grazing-resistant herbaceous plants like the Soldier thistle (*Picnomon acarna*) and the Syrian thistle (*Notobasis syriaca*) tend to be more prevalent and dominant in grazed landscapes.

Manmade terrace for farming

Trail Description

Departing from Naxos town, the drive takes approximately 45 minutes to arrive at Agios Ermolaos Lakkomersina. The trail itself starts from **Apeiranthos (1)**, marking the southern gateway of the village of Lagadi. Following a substantial descent of around 250 meters, the church of Saint Vassilios comes into view. Across from the church stands **the church of Saint Pachomios (2).**

Continuing along the downward path, after about 300 meters, you will arrive at the **Byzantine church of St. Pachomios (3).** Vegetation, trees, grass, and flanking stone walls obstruct access to the door and interior.

Byzantine churches of Agios Georgios and Pachomios

As you continue down the path, a valley bisected by a seasonally dry riverbed appears. The trail follows a steep uphill concrete path from the valley for about 10 minutes. As you continue for about 200 m, a water fountain enclosed by stone walls offers visitors the chance to replenish their water supply. Advancing further, the path leads to the church of **Agios Ermolaos (4)**, marking the end of the uphill ascent and offering an opportunity for a break. As hikers continue after a water break, they will come across an **ancient olive tree (5),** one of which is, according to locals, over 500 years old.

500-year-old Olive Tree

After the first downhill slope, another incline presents itself, unveiling yet another church, one of the oldest on Naxos. Its exterior remains remarkably preserved, and visitors can gain entry through a side entrance.

Stavros / Agios Ermolaos

Logistics

Accommodation

Apeiranthos

- Bella Vista Montagna
  - **Contact number**: +30 697 475 6733
  - Located in the heart of Apeiranthos, this apartment offers pet friendly accommodation and WIFI.
- Casa Estiva Naxos Apartments
  - **Contact number:** +30 6987301969
  - Entire apartment in the heart of the village that sleeps 2.

Getting Around

While a taxi or a car rental may be the most efficient way to travel within Naxos, there is a bus (Line 2) that will take you directly from Naxos Town to Apeiranthos. Buses leave from the harbor of Naxos (near the Portara gate) and increase during the summer months. For more information, visit https://naxosbuses.com/ or contact them by tel. +30 22850 22291, email info@naxosbuses.com.

Trail 16

TRAGAIA (CHALKI) - AGIOS GEORGIOS - DAMARIONAS - SPILIA - APALYROS CASTLE

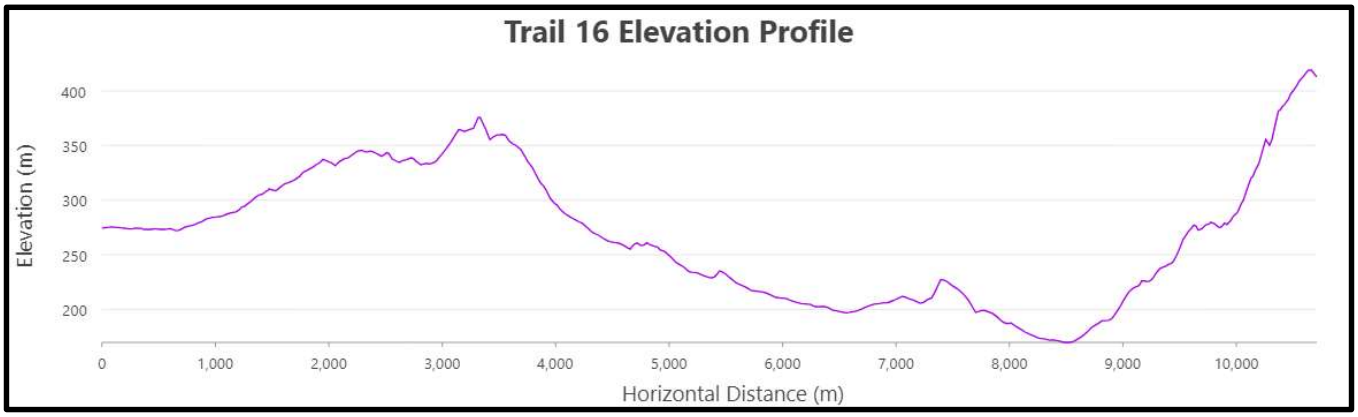
7.8 km || 4 hrs || Hard || Elevation Gain: 427 m || Elevation Loss: 288 m

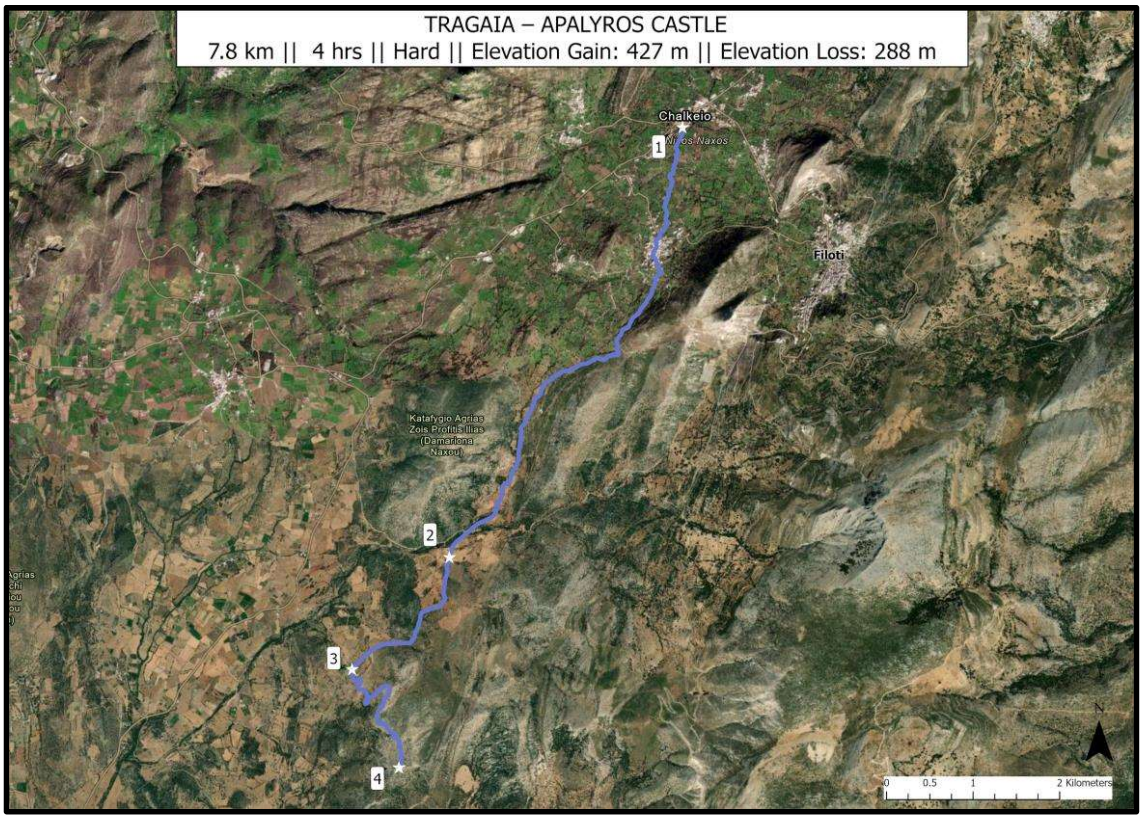
Trail Summary

Hikers will embark on this journey through nature and will hike from the village of Chalki to the Apaliros Castle. Hikers will wander past traditional homes and cafes, immersing in rich cultural heritage. While stopping in the charming village of Damarionas, travelers are encouraged to take a moment to marvel at its white-washed homes, vibrant flowers, and discover unique sights. A challenging yet rewarding trail, hikers will see rich woodlands, Cyprus trees, and fascinating wildlife. Finally, coming across the panoramic views of grasslands and rocky paths, travelers will make their way up to the mountain to view the remnants of an ancient tower.

Maps and Elevation Graphs

1. The start point of trail 16
2. Byzantine church of Panagia in Spilia
3. Another start point to Byzantine Castle of Apalyros
4. Byzantine Castle of Apalyros




TRAGAIA – APALYROS CASTLE
7.8 km || 4 hrs || Hard || Elevation Gain: 427 m || Elevation Loss: 288 m
Chalkeio
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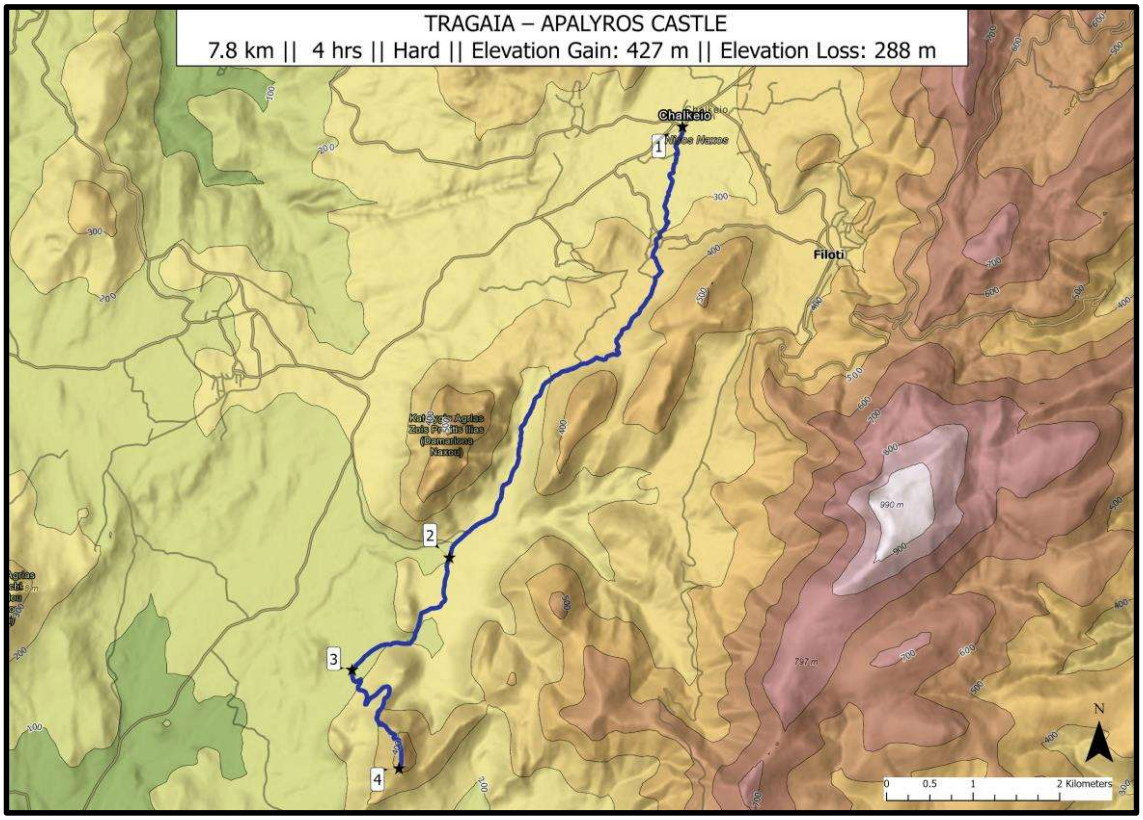
TRAGAIA – APALYROS CASTLE
7.8 km || 4 hrs || Hard || Elevation Gain: 427 m || Elevation Loss: 288 m
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Culture

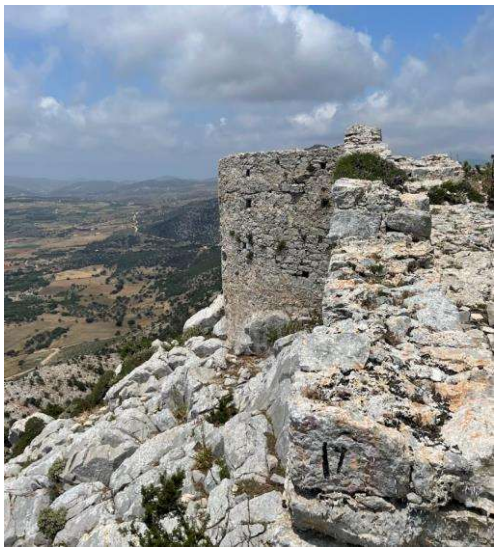
The trail begins in the former capital of the island, the beautiful town of **Chalki (1)**, about 16 km from Chora. Chalki, located in the heart of Tragea, the olive cultivation center of Naxos, offers views of neoclassical houses and buildings showcasing the village's wealth and the power it once exerted on the surrounding area. This settlement also offers several impressive restaurants and cafes where hikers can stop and purchase snacks and refreshments.

View from mountainous village of Damarionas.

After Chalki, the trail passes through the neighboring village of Damarionas. At an altitude of 230 meters, this traditional settlement has been built on the north-facing slope of Tragea and is surprisingly green. The village is picturesque, with white houses, beautiful gardens adorned with impressive flowers, and narrow, paved streets. This village is a good spot for hikers to take a break before continuing their journey. At the center of the village, a visit to a meticulously restored ancient oil mill is a must, alongside the awe-inspiring churches of Metamorfosi (dating to the 16th century) and Agios Georgios (from the 17th century), both of which stand as monumental landmarks.

Panagia tis Spilias (Virgin of the Cave)

Another important cultural attraction of this trail is the beautiful and unique **Panagia tis Spilias (2)**, also known as the Virgin of the Cave. This church is situated within a cave near the village of Damarionas. Upon entering the small cave, visitors will encounter a variety of icons, pictures, and offerings positioned beneath a striking natural stone formation.



Castle of Apalyros (8th Century)

Undoubtedly, the historical highlight of this trail is the **Byzantine Castle of Apalyros (4).** Built before the 8th century AD, this fortified settlement was possibly constructed during the reign of Emperor Leo III. It served as the acropolis of the island's capital during the Byzantine period. In 1207, shortly after the fall of Konstantinopel, the castle endured a 40-day siege before falling to the Venetian strongman Marco Sanudo, thus marking the start of the Venetian occupation in the Cyclades. The castle's strategic

importance declined after Sanudo razed the cisterns that are still visible today, which enabled survival in otherwise waterless surroundings, and after he built another castle closer to the sea in Chora. However, the castle's structure remains notable, featuring an elongated layout on a steep rocky hill with preserved walls, towers, and cisterns. Despite the uphill trek to get here, this sight is a must-see for all hikers.

Nature

The trail starts in Tragaia (Chalki), following a walkable dirt road that leads to farmland. In the beginning, due to the proximity to the **grain fields**, there are few native species, but there are plenty of farm animals to see, such as cows, sheep, and chickens. Along the dirt road, you will find the impressive thistle heads of (*Onopordum*), a spiny, tall biennial herb with large purple flower heads. The flowers attract many species of insects that rendezvous for reproduction there. This thistle is native to Europe and common along many trails in Naxos.

As the trail continues, the surroundings change from olive groves to **Mediterranean woodland**. On the mountain's western side, the path winds through an open forest consisting primarily of Phoenician juniper trees (*Juniperus turbinata*). The forest canopy provides shade from the sun, but be cautious of the orbweaver spider (*Araneus circe*) webs that often stretch between branches. Despite their size, these spiders are not harmful to humans. The trail becomes rocky with a higher density of tall shrubs and trees, which makes a suitable habitat for the Javelin Sand Boa (*Eryx jaculus*)—a shiny, fossorial snake that is also harmless to humans.

Grassy woodland with many spiders hanging between the branches

Orbweaver spider (Araneus circe)

The final segment of the trail ascends the mountain. Hiking upward, the landscape changes from the **grain fields** to the **montane habitats** with a more rocky area as the altitude rises, leading to abandoned ruins, with Greek oregano (*Origanum vulgare* subsp. *hirtum*) and rusty-back fern (*Asplenium ceterach*) dotting the way. The climb reveals a diversity of species that have adapted to the rugged environment. While resting at the mountaintop, watch for the fast, darting figure of the hummingbird hawk-moth (*Macroglossum stellatarum*), which is quick but stops to hover over plants like the Taurian thistle (*Onopordum tauricum*) for nectar. This is also perhaps the best site on Naxos to observe

Griffon vultures (*Gyps fulvus*), as they may pass by exceptionally close while trying to capture the wind to gain altitude.

Trail Description

Starting in **Chalki (1)**, this scenic trail weaves southward, flanked by scenic stone walls and partially shaded by olive trees. After about 0.5 km from the start of the trail, hikers will pass by a small soccer field and an olive grove, eventually leading to the Byzantine church of Agios Georgios at Pera Chalki. The journey's first stop is at Damarionas, about 1 km past the soccer field. After about 0.25 km from the entrance of Damarionas, the path turns left to exit the village. From there, hikers will proceed about 200m southeast before turning right into an olive grove.

As hikers navigate between rural lanes and trails covered in vegetation, they will approach the base of Prophet Elias mountain after a 2.5km walk south of the village. The trail then continues under the cool cover of a ravine, leading hikers to the **Panagia in Spilia (2)** —a Byzantine church cradled in a cave and offering a shady retreat.

Castle of Apalyros (8th Century)

Continuing southward, the path comes across a wide valley before ascending an increasingly steep hill crowned by the fortified **Byzantine Castle of Apalyros (4).** While a challenging hike, the castle's northern side rewards hikers with panoramic views of Naxos's southwestern side. From the 7th through the 13th centuries, this castle thrived as a bustling fortified hilltop settlement, securing its status as one of the Aegean's most formidable castles throughout the Byzantine age. On this trail, hikers need to pay close attention to the markers on the ground, which can be difficult to spot due to the rocky terrain. This is a rough and steep section of the trail, and we remind hikers to be safe while climbing. Be prepared for potentially windy conditions at the summit. Visitors can choose to map navigate to **location 3 (3)** on the map if they want to just climb this peak to see Byzantine Castle of Apalyros, which is another location to climb this peak.

Logistics

Accommodation

Chalki

- Villa Onar - In village
  - Contact Number: +30 694 451 02

Getting Around

While a taxi or car rental may be the most efficient way to travel within Naxos, buses (Lines 2, 6) offer transportation between Chora and Chalki. Additionally, there is Line 7, which

runs from Moni to Chalki. Bus frequency increases during the summer months. For more detailed information, visit https://naxosbuses.com/ or contact tel. +30 22850 22291, or email info@naxosbuses.com.

Trail 17

VILLAGE OF TRIPODES - TOWER OF AGIOS GEORGIOS - BEACH OF PLAKA

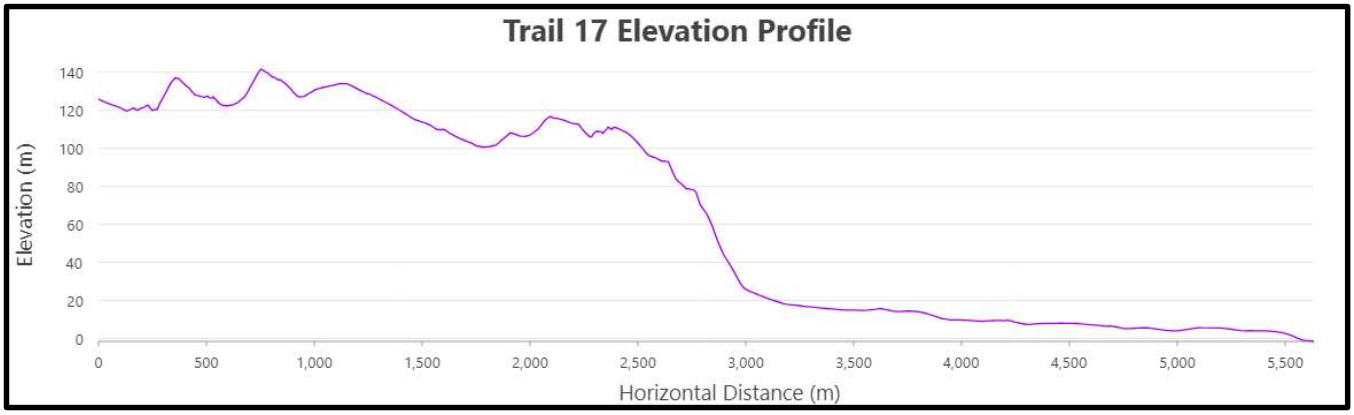
4.6 km || 3h || Moderate|| Elevation Gain: 77 m || Elevation Loss: 203 m

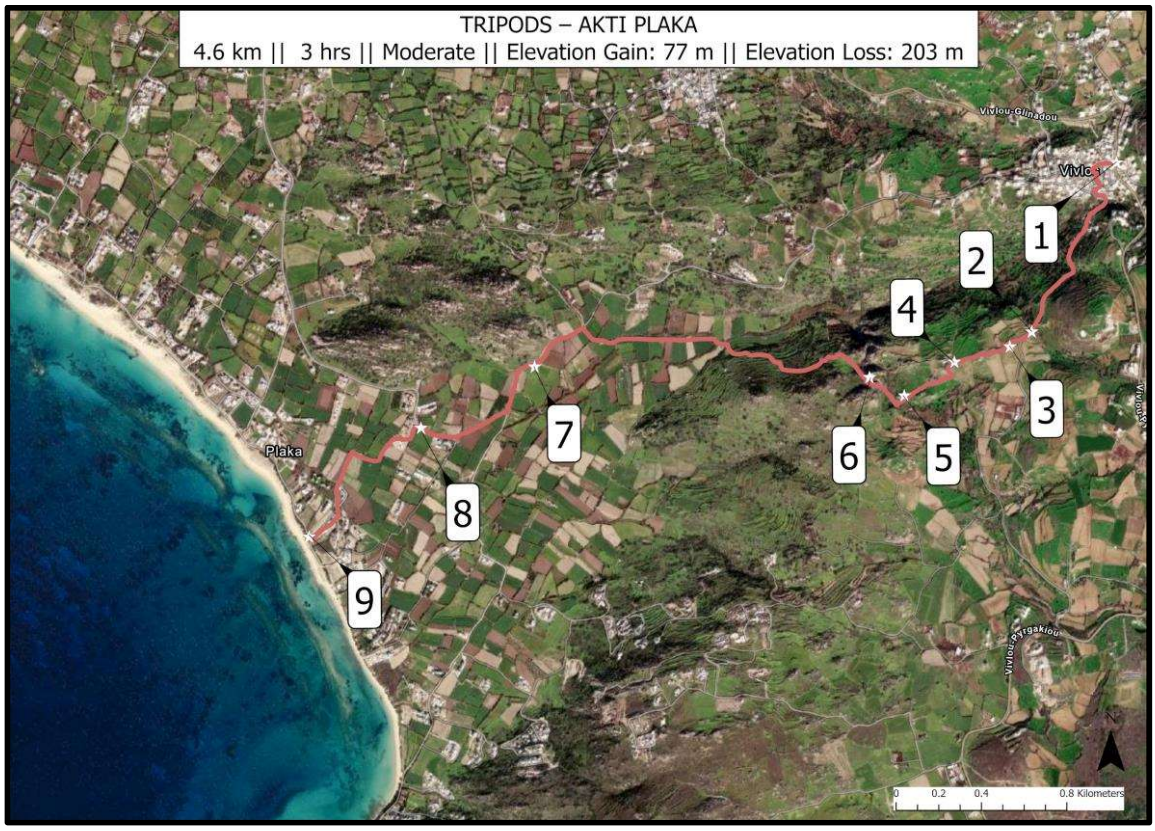
Trail Summary

The journey from the village of Tripodes (aka Vivlos) down to the coastal beach of Plaka has hikers descending on a trail brimming with historical sites and natural beauty. This moderately challenging hike will take visitors past a beautiful landscape, as well as the tourist region of Plaka, to the coastal zone of Naxos. The trail ends at the beach of Plaka, where hikers are encouraged to relax, beach comb, and spend the day under the sun.

Maps and Elevation Graphs

1. The start point of trail 17
2. A ruined village, Paleopyrgos
3. Agios Nikolaos Plana
4. Agios Georgios
5. Agios Theodoroi
6. Agios Nikolaos
7. Agios Matthaios
8. Agios Vlassios
9. The end point of trail 17




TRIPODS – AKTI PLAKA
4.6 km || 3 hrs || Moderate || Elevation Gain: 77 m || Elevation Loss: 203 m
Plaka
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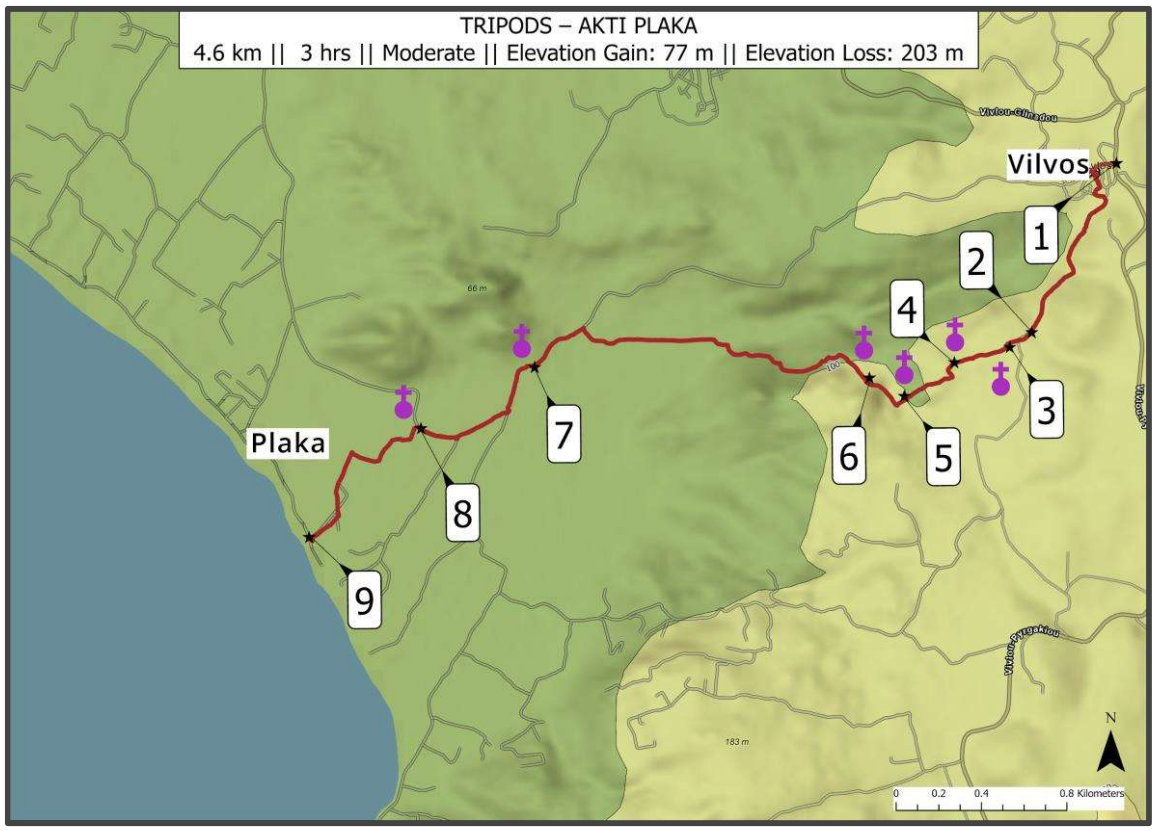
TRIPODS – AKTI PLAKA
4.6 km || 3 hrs || Moderate || Elevation Gain: 77 m || Elevation Loss: 203 m
Vilvos
Plaka
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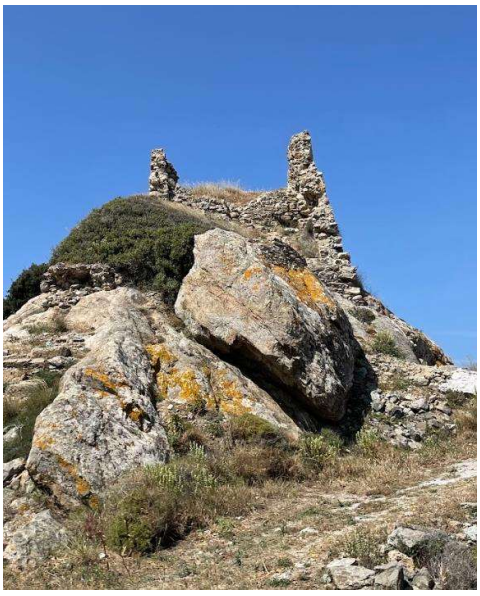
Culture

This trail starts in the village of **Tripodes (or Vivlos) (1)**, a small traditional settlement 8 km south of the capital with whitewashed houses, narrow streets, and beautiful ruins of windmills. The village name translates to 'three legs,' and villagers give different explanations regarding this, including one that claims that while digging at some point in the past, a three-legged stool was discovered, on which the first community meetings were recorded in a Bible. The village invites tourists to visit its many sights, including the local Folklore Museum that showcases Tripodes' history, folk culture, and implements of traditional ways of life and work. Additionally, this is a great stop to pick up and taste local delicacies such as 'ksinotiro' (sour cheese) and 'arseniko' (a firm, aged goat cheese).

Agios Nikolaos Plana



Hills along the path consist of granodiorite, a rock that erodes into characteristic rounded boulders.

Not too far from the beach, hikers will come across the Chapel of **Agios Nikolaos Plana (3).** This Greek Church is set in a peaceful setting where travelers can sit down and admire the views of the sea, coves, and rocks. Just across the road from the beach is the church of **Agios Matthaios (7)**, built on the site of an Early Christian Basilica. Hikers will see some vestiges of mosaic floors, architectural fragments, and a baptismal font on the site.

Hikers will come across the Plaka Tower, also known as **Paleopyrgos or Ariadne's Tower,** which remains a reminder of its former glory, often overlooked because of its secluded location. This tower has sparked numerous legends about its construction. As hikers will see, only the massive stone foundation and part of the northern wall remain standing, featuring a window, the bastion, and stone stairs. The tower is accessible via a country road connecting the village of Tripodes with the coast. This specific location suggests that the tower may have served as an observatory to warn people of any incoming pirate ships.

Nature

The trail begins in Tripodes on a dirt path winding through agricultural areas. While narrow, this section of the trail offers beautiful views of the traditionally used countryside and beaches that lay further ahead towards the end of this path. The terraced fields are typically used to grow grain for own consumption or in years with insufficient precipitation for animal fodder. They are often left to lay fallow, allowing the development of interesting, diverse old field plant communities. Typical evergreen bushes include the Wild mastic (*Pistacia lentiscus*) and the Phoenician juniper (*Juniperus turbinata*). Both species are commonly found in limestone substrates, are somewhat tolerant of saline environments, and will progressively invade abandoned agricultural areas in the absence of fire, plowing, or intense grazing. The mastic tree is dioecious, meaning there are separate male and female plants, the latter recognizable by their red berries. The dry, rocky slopes also harbor numerous other plant species like the prickly pear (*Opuntia ficus-indica*), yellow horned poppies (*Glaucium flavum*, near beaches), figworts (*Scrophularia heterophylla*, on rockfaces), and the mallows (*Malva unguiculata*). Among insects in the area, typical taxa include the blue-Spotted hairstreak (*Satyrium spini*), Lulworth skipper (*Thymelicus acteon*), and European honeybee (*Apis mellifera*).

Blue spot hairstreak *(Satyrium spini)*

Prickly pear (Opuntia ficus-indica)

Once the path enters the coastal plain at the mountain's base, the trail can turn muddy and be lined by giant reeds (*Arundo donax*); see photo. Once filled with water, this dried-up path leads to a dry watercourse or arroyo that seasonally fills after rain and then connects to the **old fields.** Along the shady path, Giant reed (*Arundo donax*) provides shade and wind protection. It leads to the present agricultural fields, featuring walkable roads. Fields are bordered by stone walls that separate the different products being grown. In addition, the fields are now being watered by a sprinkler system.

This presence of water attracts a large number of snails, including chocolate-band snails (*Helix vermiculata*). The roads finally lead you to a beach. Unfortunately, the last coastal portion of the trail is presently under heavy touristic housing development, leading to a general lack of the expected coastal species.

Trail Description

The journey begins at Vivlos, marked by the Trail 17 sign **(1).** Visitors can use Google Maps to navigate to the parking lot. At the Kafe Taverna Banikos, a fork in the road splits into two directions, west and south. Veer west, and you'll soon encounter a bakery called Artos Lagogianni, a perfect spot to get bread and water. Trail 17 requires passengers to walk in a westerly direction.

Path with giant reeds as supporting structures on both sides

Aqios Nikolaos Plana

Continue on the main road for about 106 m, passing the village square, before taking a country road southwest, walking through gentle landscapes and modest elevations. About 176 m from the bakery, you'll spot a pharmacy and a water station, followed by a pathway leading to the Folklore Museum. Continue past all these and the town's border until the concrete gives way to a sandy track flanked by dry-stone walls. Upon reaching another road fork after 213 m from the first left turn on the main road, proceed straight, as the left path is inaccessible.

The route offers views of the village's west fertile plain. Threading through potato fields and vegetable gardens, the path eventually merges with the Tripodon-Plakas road. A brief southwest tour about 1100m from the village reveals the ancient village of **Paleopyrgos (2)**, dating to the Hellenistic era. Its ruins command a sweeping vista over the Plaka plain and coastline.

After 133m from the ruined village, at the next fork, take the right path towards **Agios Nikolaos Plana church (3).** From here, descend towards Plaka, continuing southwest along a dirt path. At about 230 meters, you will see the **Agios Georgios church (4).** Here, you need to take the left fork. Continuing southwest for 250m, you will reach **Agios Theodori church (5).** Turn here and climb 150 meters to the northwest to reach the **Agios Nikolaos church (6).** Continue along the current path for 1200 meters as it turns into the main road, and then continue straight on the road.

Agios Nikolaos

Agios Mattheos

This road then leads to the **Agios Mattheos (St. Matthew) church (7)**, an early Christian monument erected atop an ancient sanctuary. To the left of Agios Matthaios, a worn water tower stands. Beyond the church, the route descends before ascending again. Continuing to walk for 206 meters, you will come across another fork in the road, where you will go right and continue for about 434 meters to come across the last church of this journey, **Agios Vlassios (8).**

Look for the signpost at the church of Agios Vlassios, where you enter the last section of the trail. Further along, a sandy and reed-lined route offers distant sea views. The trail culminates at a **wide beach characterized by striking coastal dunes (9).**

Logistics

Accommodation

Tripodes

- Daphne's Place
  - **Contact Number:** +30 697 729 5371
  - Located 8 km from Naxos Castle, this vacation home offers mountain views, with free WIFI and private parking. Book on a third-party site (booking.com).
- Vivlos Apartments
  - **Contact Number:** +30 2285 042709
  - Vacation property with garden and barbeque facilities; one bedroom, living room, and a well-equipped kitchen.

Getting Around

While a taxi or car rental may be the most efficient way to travel within Naxos, bus Line 3 will take visitors from Naxos Town (Chora) to Vivlos, making stops in Kastraki and Alyko as well. Buses increase during the summer months. For more information, visit https://naxosbuses.com/ or contact us by phone. +30 22850 22291, email info@naxosbuses.com.

Trail K

PANERMOS - YROKASTRO

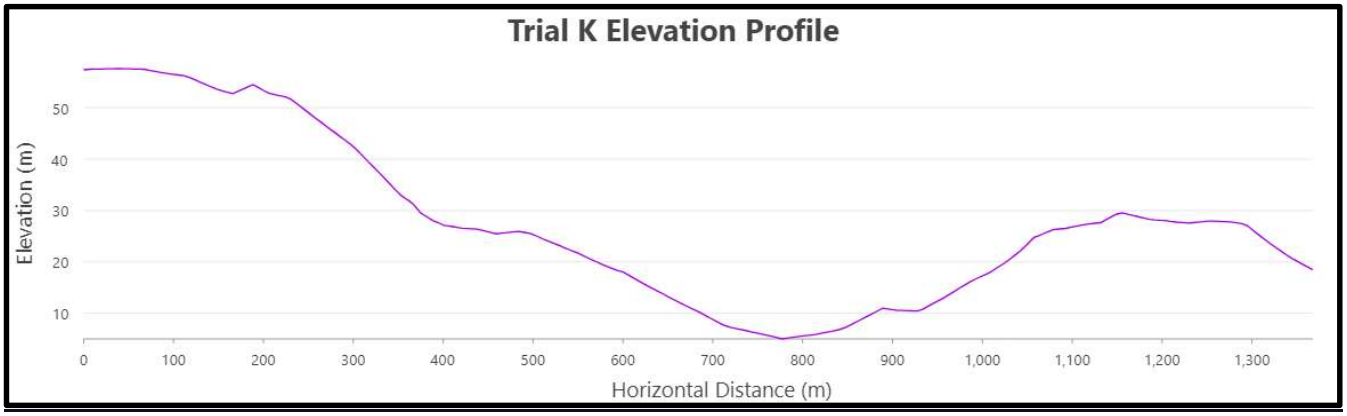
1.4 km || 1 hr || Easy || Elevation Gain: 21 m || Elevation Loss: 61 m

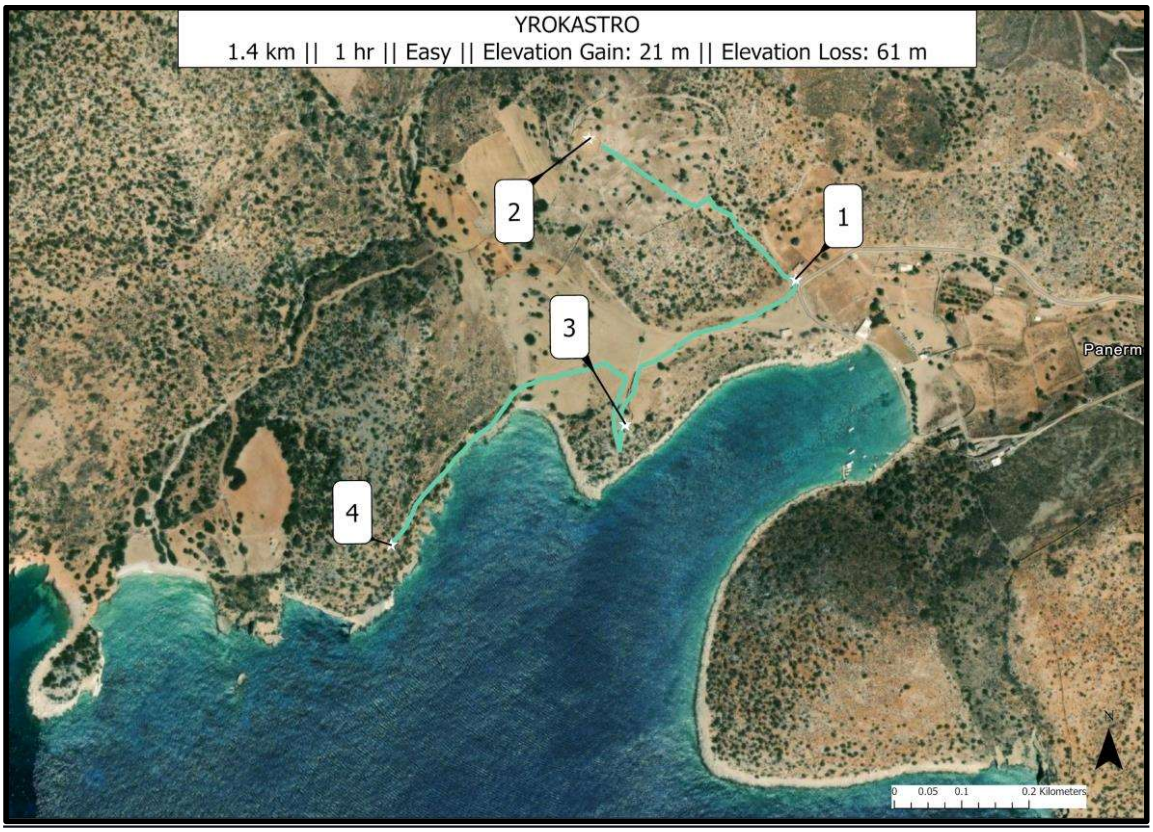
Trail Summary

This easy trek takes hikers along the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea, which offers crystal clear waters. Hikers will be able to complete this trail in about an hour and then spend the rest of their day enjoying the beach and the south side of Naxos. The trail showcases a major cultural site, the Historic Panormos Acropolis, in an idyllic natural landscape. Right by the trail is Panormos, where travelers can rest, spend the night, and enjoy Greek cuisine.

Maps and Elevation Graphs

1. The start point of trail K
2. Panormos Acropolis
3. Holy Trinity Church (Εκκλησία Αγίας Τριάδος)
4. The end point of trail K




YROKASTRO
1.4 km || 1 hr || Easy || Elevation Gain: 21 m || Elevation Loss: 61 m
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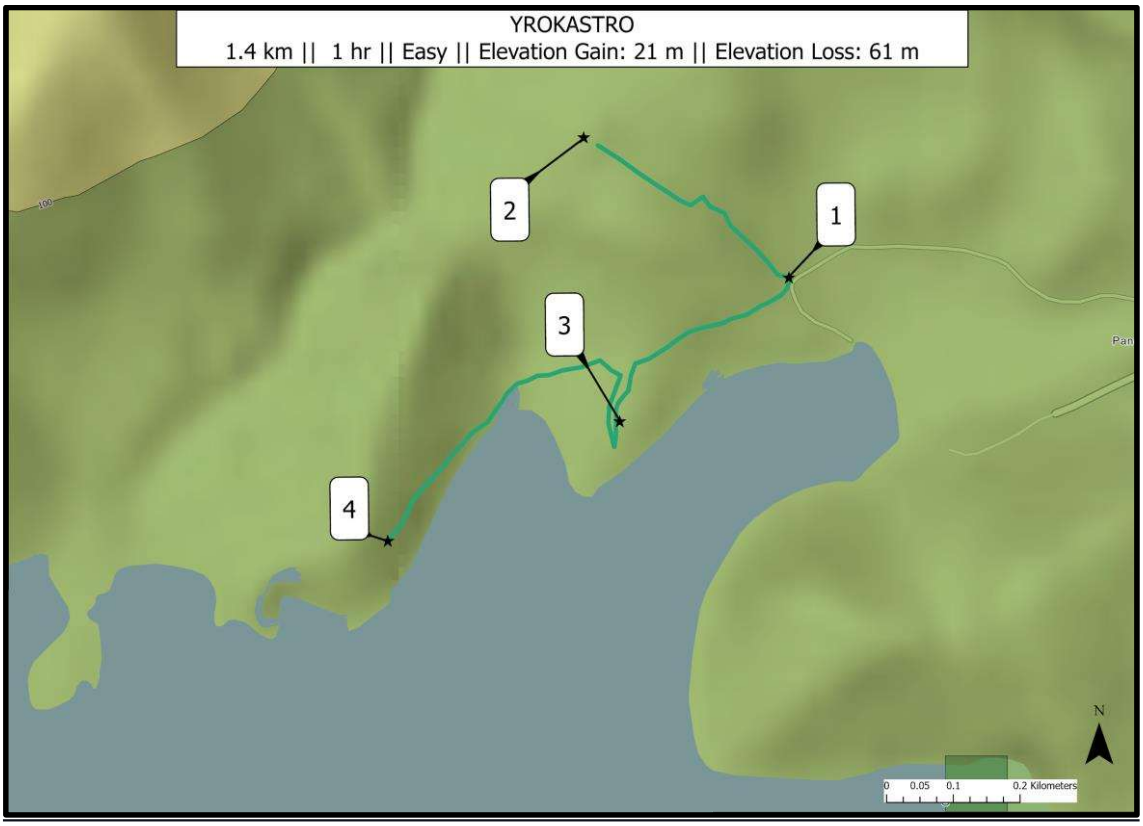
YROKASTRO
1.4 km || 1 hr || Easy || Elevation Gain: 21 m || Elevation Loss: 61 m
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Culture

Located in Panormos, hikers will come across the **Prehistoric Acropolis** at Korfari Ton Amygdalion (2500 - 2300 / 2200 BC) **(2).** The preserved architectural remains of the acropolis belong to a single fortified building. Activities such as storage and food preparation have been identified within different rooms. The fort (on the summit) also served as a refuge in times of danger for the people of the nearby settlement at the hills' sides. The end of this Bronze Age acropolis was violent, destroyed by fire, possibly following an enemy attack, as seen through the remaining traces of fire and sling bullets. This site gives evidence of the existence of a well-organized society dating as far back as the third millennium BCE.

Prehistoric Acropolis

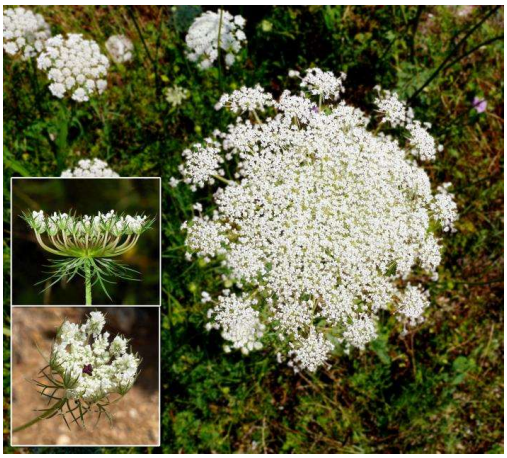
Panermos Beach

Beyond the archeological site, the coastline also has many things to offer. At the end of this trail, take a look as you walk the coastline of **Panormos Beach.** Located 54 kilometers from Naxos Town, this is one of the most remote beaches in Naxos, far off the beaten track. A beautiful sandy beach with few pebbles, crystal-clear waters, and natural shade is the perfect spot to end your hike and enjoy the day.

On this isolated beach, hikers will encounter the attractive **Holy Trinity Church (3).** This spot offers visitors views of Paros and Mykonos in the distance, and a quiet, calm location for a rest.

Holy Trinity Church

Nature



Wild carrot (Daucus carota)

The region is very dry since it is located in the rain shadow of Mt. Zas. As a result, there are relatively few trees, and the only agricultural method possible is grain cultivation. Beginning in Panormos, the trail runs alongside a farm property, replete with a herd of sheep and a view of the beautiful sea.

The first part of the trail leads to the Acropolis adjacent to a vast **grain field**. The local flora has developed adaptations to survive the lack of water and the dry ecosystem, such as spiny leaves, shorter and broader forms, and waxy cuticle layers. Near the seashore is a **phrygana habitat**, a typical Mediterranean low scrubland community. The tallest vegetation in the area consists of Phoenecian juniper (*Juniperus turbinata*) and wild olive trees (*Olea europaea*), both characteristic taxa of the Thermo-Mediterranean vegetation zone. This environment is also ideal for herbaceous plant species that thrive in disturbed areas, including wild carrots (*Daucus carota*), little robins (*Geranium purpureum*), and wild parsnips (*Pastinaca sativa*). During the months of April and May, the presence of wild carrots also draws the Semipunctated shield bug (*Graphosoma semipunctatum*). Furthermore, the grassy field attracts insects such as Firebugs (*Pyrrhocoris apterus*) and the blue-winged Grasshopper (*Oedipoda caerulescens*).

The second part of the trail heads west along the coast, leading through **phrygana** dotted with short, spiky bushes like Mediterranean wild Thyme (*Coridothymus capitatus*) and thorny broom (*Genista acanthoclada*). A peculiar sound may catch your attention as you continue along the path. Looking towards a Pistachio bush, you might discover its source: the Egyptian locust (*Anacridium aegyptium*). Many insects remain hidden among the plants or within them, from the praying mantis (*Rivetina balcanica*) to the bath white (*Pontia daplidice*) butterfly.

Egyptian locust *(Anacridium aegyptium)*

Trail Description

View from the Acropolis at the end of trail 14

The route starts in Panormos, in a very beautiful bay **(1).** One of its characteristics is that it crosses a short part of the south-eastern coast of Naxos, which is practically untouched by modern interventions. The trail is currently only 1.4km long, as it has yet to be developed and maintained entirely.

At the starting point of the trail you can choose to walk either north towards the **Panormos Acropolis (2)**, or west along the coast, where you can also swim in the bay. After you visit the Panormos Acropolis, you can return by the same route to the starting point and from there continue along the coast to the southwest of the bay.

Holy Trinity Church

From the parking area above the port of Panermos, hikers can go towards the west, parallel to the coastline. They will come across the **Holy Trinity Church (Εκκλησία Αγίας Τριάδος) (3).** The course continues towards the coasts of Spedos – where an important Proto-Cycladic settlement and tombs have also been identified – and Rina – noteworthy for the deep blue waters and an impressive sea cave.

Logistics

Accommodation

- Villa Evdokia - Vineyard Family Apartments
  - Booking via 3rd party website: https://booking.com
  - Situated 20 minutes from Panormos and the southern part of Naxos. It is surrounded by a wonderful beach, with the sea on one side and a small lake on the other.

Getting Around

Panormos is located in one of the most remote areas of Naxos. The region is almost completely uninhabited, so there is no public transportation. The best way to travel to this trail is via a taxi or car rental service. Plan about 1.5 hours of driving from Chora (Naxos Town).

Appendix II: Species Descriptions

The subsequent resources aided in identifying and detailing the flora and fauna species found along the trails of Naxos. The presence of these species was confirmed through field observations, photographs, expert evaluation, and/or direct references from the resources themselves.

- Böhling, N. B. (1994). Studien zur landschaftsökologischen Raumgliederung auf der mediterranen Insel Naxos (Griechenland) unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Zeigerpflanzen. Balogh Scientific Books.
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- Papagianni, M.G. (2016). Atlas of the Aegean Flora. Part 1: Text & Plates. Part 2: Maps. Strid . Berlin: Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin, Freie Universität Berlin. Edinburgh Journal of Botany.
- Valakos, E., Pafilis, P., Sotiropoulos, K., Lymberakis, P., Maragou, P. & Foufopoulos, J. (2008). The Amphibians and Reptiles of Greece, Edition Chimaira.

Plants

Trees:

Cashew family (Anacardiaceae)	
Turpentine tree (*Pistacia terebinthus*) 	The Turpentine Tree is a deciduous species that is distinguishable from the similar Mastic Tree (*Pistacia lentiscus*) by the terminal leaflet located at the end of each branch. The small, long, purple-red flowers form dense clusters at the points where the leaf stems join the branches. This tree blooms from March to June. The fruit of the Turpentine Tree begins as a bright red berry and turns brown as it ripens from October to December. It is commonly found in dry scrubland at lower altitudes within the Mediterranean regions of Greece.
Cypress family (Cupressaceae)	

Italian cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) 	The Italian Cypress is an evergreen tree recognized for its tall, slender, pyramid-like shape and ovate scale-like leaves. Its cones are woody, measuring 25-40 mm (as shown in the photo on the right). The foliage, dense and dark green, forms in thick sprays. This tree is commonly found in the warmer regions of Greece and has become naturalized in the Ionian Islands and the Peloponnese. It typically grows in natural woodlands on rocky, calcareous slopes at elevations ranging from 300 to 1400 meters, occasionally reaching up to 1800 meters. The Italian Cypress is known for its longevity, with some trees living over 1,000 years. In Greece, the tree is often called "graveyard cypress" due to its traditional association with cemeteries and mourning. The Greeks and Romans referred to it as the 'mournful tree' because of its connections to the Fates and Furies, as well as to the rulers of the underworld. The tree would be planted near graves or in front of a house or entrance hall as a sign to discourage visitors from entering a place believed to be tainted by the presence of a deceased person.
Pea (Legumes) family (Fabaceae)	

Carob (*Ceratonia siliqua*) 	The Carob, or Locust Bean, is a small dioecious tree with a robust trunk, reaching heights of 10-15 meters. It has pinnately compound leaves that are waxy, shiny, dark green and smooth-edged. The small greenish flowers bloom in clusters on the branches from August to November. The tree produces long, curved, and flattened pods that turn from green to dark brown or black when ripe, with the fruiting period spanning from April to May. The seeds of the Carob tree are commonly used in the preparation of sweets, while the pods are often ground into a powder and used as a substitute for cocoa in baking and confectionery. Additionally, the wood of the Carob tree is hard and dense, making it an excellent material for crafting furniture, tools, and utensils.
Mahogany family (Meliaceae)	

Chinaberry tree (*Melia azedarach*) 	The Chinaberry tree is a small tree characterized by its pinnate leaves and hanging clusters of lilac flowers, each with five petals. It is also recognizable by its spherical yellow fruit. The fragrant flowers are pale purple or lilac in color and grow in clusters. The fruit is a drupe that turns light yellow when ripe, remains on the tree throughout winter, and gradually wrinkles and fades to an almost white color. The tree typically blooms in May. Native to China, the Chinaberry tree is considered invasive and non-native in Greece. It is often planted as an ornamental tree and has become locally naturalized in coastal areas of the Peloponnese and Crete. In English literature, the Chinaberry tree is also known as the bead tree or the pride of India. Additionally, it shares the name "Indian lilac" with the neem tree, a related species.
Mulberry family (Moraceae)	

Black mulberry (*Morus nigra*) 	The Black Mulberry is a deciduous tree that is commonly planted in Greek villages. It features broad leaves that are either lobed or heart-shaped (cordate) and produces oblong, edible fruits that are white when unripe and black when mature. The tree's flowers are green, arranged in short, dense spikes, and the fruits are quite acidic until they fully ripen. The Black Mulberry typically blooms from May to June, with the fruit ripening from late summer to early fall. The fruit of the Black Mulberry is large, juicy, and offers a pleasant mix of sweetness and tartness, which many consider being the tastiest among mulberry species. This makes it superior in flavor to the White Mulberry (Morus alba) and popular for local culinary uses, such as marmalade, syrup, and jelly-making. Additionally, the tree's hard and water-resistant wood is valuable in construction.
Rose family (Rosaceae)	
Cherry plum (*Prunus cerasifera*) 	The Cherry Plum is either a shrub or a small tree that sports many slender and intricately branched stems. Its young twigs are smooth, without hairs (glabrous), and shiny. The leaves are wedge-shaped at the base and have a soft down (pubescent) on the veins underneath. It produces white flowers, which are often found singly. The fruit is either spherical or egg-shaped, with a diameter of 1.5 to 3 cm, and can be red or yellow, though it tends to have a bitter taste. The Cherry Plum blossoms from March to April, and the fruits mature from July to August. It can be found in woodlands throughout Central and Northern Greece, as well as the Eastern Aegean Islands. The fruit from this tree is consumed fresh, or it may be used to make soups, juices, or alcoholic drinks. The Cherry Plum is also known for its hardiness and disease resistance, which is why it is frequently used as rootstock for other species. Additionally, there are cultivated varieties of the Cherry Plum that are valued for their decorative qualities and are often planted in parks and urban areas for their striking spring blossoms.

European pear (*Pyrus communis*) 	The European Pear is a deciduous tree that ranges from small to medium size, typically reaching heights of 10 meters but commonly grown at 3-5 meters in cultivation. It features a pyramid-shaped crown, and its distinguishing gray-brown bark is another characteristic feature, along with branches that have a shiny, gray finish. The pear tree produces fragrant and creamy white flowers that bloom in the spring, followed by fruiting from mid-summer to fall. It is often cultivated and may be grafted onto wild *P. spinosa* in mountainous regions by shepherds. The European Pear is harvested in the wild for its fruit and medicinal properties. It is also occasionally sold in local markets. The wood of the pear tree is highly regarded by cabinet makers for its excellent quality, although it is usually only available in limited quantities.

Shrubs:

Amaranth family (Amaranthaceae)	
Mediterranean saltbush (*Atriplex halimus*) 	The Mediterranean Saltbush is a robust, evergreen shrub that can grow up to 2 meters tall. Its leaves are typically small, narrow, and lance-shaped, featuring a gray-green color. Both the leaves and stems are coated with fine hairs that give the plant a silver-gray sheen and help reduce water loss through transpiration. The male and female flowers of the saltbush differ in color, with males being yellowish and females reddish. They are grouped in dense clusters along the stems but are usually not very noticeable. The plant blooms from July to October, and it produces small, one-seeded fruits that are dry and have a paper-like feel. The fruits usually start to fall off in early October. This plant is especially suited to coastal environments and is most commonly found in the Southern Aegean area. Historically, the Mediterranean Saltbush has been valued as forage for livestock in dry regions and has been used in traditional herbal medicine for its medicinal qualities.
Asparagus family (Asparagaceae)	
Century plant (*Agave americana*) 	The century plant can live for 20 to 100 years. It is a monocarpic plant, which means it only blooms and bears fruit once in its lifetime before dying. Near the end of its life, the plant grows a tall, branched stalk covered with yellow flowers, reaching up to 8-9 meters (25-30 feet) in height. After blooming, the plant dies, but it creates offshoots from its base, so new plants can grow. The century plant is known for its long, fleshy leaves and is commonly used in Greece as a natural fence due to this characteristic. It blooms from June to August and is frequently planted and naturalized along roadsides and used as a living fence between fields, mainly in coastal areas, and it can occasionally be found at elevations up to 700 meters in Crete. Originally from Mexico, the plant has adapted so well in Greece that it is now considered a native species.
Cactus family (Cactaceae)	

Prickly pear (*Opuntia ficus-indica*) 	The prickly pear often grows as a shrub in hedges but can also develop into a tree. Its shoots are made up of jointed, oval, fleshy, prickly segments that can reach lengths of up to 40 cm. The flowers are large and yellow, and the cylindrical red fruits are covered in numerous small thorns. These fruits ripen from May to June and again from August to October. Although the prickly pear was originally introduced from tropical America, it is now commonly found in the low-level waste areas of Mediterranean Greece and its islands. It thrives on steep, rocky slopes and stone walls amidst terraced olive groves, particularly in hot, dry environments, and is often seen in or near villages. Prickly pears are a tasty summer fruit in Greece and are enjoyed by those who know how to properly prepare them. However, the plant is considered invasive because it competes with and can overtake local vegetation in these habitats.
Honeysuckle family (Caprifoliaceae)	

European honeysuckle (*Lonicera etrusca*) 	The European honeysuckle is a deciduous climbing vine known for its attractive and sweet-smelling flowers, which first open in hues of ivory with a hint of purple. The leaves are oval to egg-shaped and grow in pairs along the stems. Inside, the flowers are creamy white and soon change to yellow, while the outside typically shows a crimson-purple color, though less commonly they can be yellow, pink, or brown. After flowering, red berries appear. The blooming period extends from July until the first frost. This vine thrives in woodlands, hedgerows, scrublands, and other shady areas. The specific epithet "periclymenum" comes from the Greek name for honeysuckle. A charming childhood pastime involves sucking the base of the flowers to taste the sweet nectar. Beyond its ornamental appeal, the European honeysuckle has medicinal uses due to its expectorant and laxative properties. Its climbing nature makes it an excellent option for ground cover as well.
Morning-glories family (Convolvulaceae)	

Cretan bindweed (*Convolvulus dorycnium*) 	The Cretan Bindweed is a shrublet with a hairy surface and erect, rigid stems that turn woody as they mature. It has small, linear, grayish-green leaves that densely cover the stems. Pink flowers blossom in clusters located where leaf stems join the main stem, known as the axillary. The flowering period is from May to July. This plant is typically found in dry, stony areas and grows at altitudes up to 500 meters in Southern Greece.
Spurges family (Euphorbiaceae)	
Greek spiny spurge (*Euphorbia acanthothamnos*) 	The Greek Spiny Spurge is a low, rounded, and spiny shrub with numerous stems and branches that can reach up to 1 meter in height. The plant defends itself from herbivores with sharp spines or thorns that cover its stems and branches. It has small, narrow, scale-like leaves that spiral along the stems and are often dropped during drought conditions. The shrub produces dense clusters of greenish-yellow flowers, known as cyathia, which are specialized structures that create the appearance of a single flower but are, in fact, made up of several smaller flowers. These are similar to the inflorescences found on related species like the Mediterranean Spurge (*Euphorbia characias*). The Greek Spiny Spurge flowers from March to May. Typically found in dry, open areas up to 1000 meters in altitude in Southern Greece, this species is well-suited to hot, arid climates and able to cope with poor soil quality. The term "Acanthothamnos," its specific epithet, means "thorny bush" in Greek.

Tree spurge (*Euphorbia dendroides*) 	The Tree Spurge is an evergreen succulent plant with a shrubby, tree-like growth that can reach heights of up to 2 meters. Its leaves spiral around the stems and are often grouped at the branch tips. The plant has small, yellow-green to yellow flowers, densely packed into clusters known as cyathia, and these clusters are organized in terminal cymes. When distinguishing the Tree Spurge from the Mediterranean Spurge (*Euphorbia characias*), note that the Tree Spurge has woody stems that contribute to its bushy shape and smaller flower clusters at the branch tips, whereas the Mediterranean Spurge has herbaceous stems with larger flower clusters. As with all plants in the genus Euphorbia, the Tree Spurge produces a milky latex that can irritate the skin and is toxic if ingested. The blooming period is from March to May. While the Tree Spurge is relatively common and can be found in dry, rocky seaside locations like Naxos, it is actually endemic to the limestone cliffs and gorges of southwestern Crete, where it grows up to 500 meters in elevation. The plant's woody stems and branches not only support its structure but are also utilized in local crafts and construction.
<u>Pea (Legumes) family (Fabaceae)</u>	
Tree medick (*Medicago arborea*) 	The Tree Medick is a distinctive perennial shrub, easily identified by its orange-yellow flower heads which sit atop long stalks, and by the characteristic spirally coiled, flat pods that are a type of legume fruit. This leafy shrub can grow up to 4 meters tall and has a robust, woody base. It flowers from February to May, and occasionally blooms later. The Tree Medick thrives in rocky soils, on stony slopes, in uncultivated fields, and along the edges of cultivated fields. It is particularly common in coastal areas of Southern Greece and the islands. Locals harvest the Tree Medick from the wild for use as food. Moreover, it is often grown in Mediterranean climates as an ornamental plant and for soil stabilization purposes.

Spiny broom (*Calicotome villosa*) 	The Spiny Broom is a notably thorny and dense shrub that bears small, trifoliate leaves with a soft, pubescent underside. Its yellow, fragrant flowers grow in clusters and feature a hairy calyx. The pods of the plant are also hairy. The flowering season runs from March to May. This shrub is common in the dry scrublands of Mediterranean Greece, thriving at elevations up to 900 meters. It is a significant component of the maquis and garigue vegetation types, especially in coastal regions, although it's less common in the northeastern extreme and absent from the inland mainland and interior of the Peloponnese; it is usually found at elevations ranging from sea level to 700 meters, and up to 1200 meters in Crete. Historically, the florets of the Spiny Broom were used to infuse sesame oil with flavor in ancient times. In contemporary practices, Arabs in the country still use these florets to flavor butter.
Hairy canary-clover (*Dorycnium hirsutum*) 	The Hairy Canary-Clover is a low-growing shrub that is extremely hairy, with woody stems at the base that become more herbaceous toward the tips. Its leaves are trifoliate, each composed of three leaflets covered in a thick coat of fine hairs. Flowers range from white to pale pink and are grouped into tight clusters at the ends of the stems. After the clover-like flowers bloom, they give way to shiny, cylindrical seed pods with a red-brown hue. The blooming period spans from April to July. This plant is commonly found in dry, open scrublands and on the edges of woodlands, thriving in elevations up to 1200 meters throughout much of Greece. The genus name "Dorycnium" is derived from the Greek words "dory" for "spear" and "knaein" meaning "to smear," referring to historical practices of applying the plant's poisonous sap to spears for use in battle. Its specific epithet, "hirsutus," is a Latin word that translates to "shaggy" or "hairy," aptly describing the plant's appearance.
Frankeniaceae	

Hairy seaheath (*Frankenia hirsuta*) 	The Hairy Seaheath is a woody-based, low-growing perennial shrub that typically stands up to 30 cm tall. It tends to form dense mats or clumps. Its small and narrow leaves are closely set and covered with fine hairs, creating a soft, fuzzy look. Its flowers, which are white or lilac, often group together at the branch ends. This plant has a fibrous root system, which not only secures it in sandy or loose soils but also reinforces coastal ecosystems by preventing erosion. As with many plants in the Frankeniaceae family, the Hairy Seaheath (Frankenia hirsuta) has a high salt tolerance, allowing it to flourish in saline soils and coastal conditions. It blooms from mid-July to late September and is typically found in saline coastal environments such as salt marshes, dunes, and sandy or alkaline soils, especially in the East Aegean regions.
<u>Mint family (Lamiaceae)</u>	
Three-lobed sage (*Salvia fruticosa*) 	The Three-Lobed Sage is an aromatic perennial shrub that can grow up to 2 feet in both height and width. Flower stalks extend about 1 foot or more above the leaves. The plant is covered with hairs and has numerous clustered leaves of varying sizes, which give it a silvery and bushy look. It features long spikes of pink or lilac flowers, each about half an inch long, arranged in whorls on the flowering stem. The calyx is dark purple. This sage blooms from late March to June. It is commonly found in garigue and also grows in maquis, olive groves, and open coniferous woodlands, at elevations ranging from sea level up to 600 meters, occasionally reaching 1150 meters. The leaves of the Three-Lobed Sage are rich in essential oils, containing some of the same compounds found in lavender.

Coast germander (*Teucrium brevifolium*) 	The Coast Germander is a low-growing shrub with slightly hairy twigs and small, linear, grey-green leaves that have smooth edges. Both surfaces of the leaves are covered with a thick waxy layer, known as the cuticle. The plant is known for its small flowers, which are white or pale blue in color, and can be found in spikes or loose clusters. It typically blooms from late February to May, and often again from October to November. You can find the Coast Germander as part of the phrygana plant community on hot, dry, and often south-facing, rocky limestone slopes in the central and southern Aegean region, at elevations from sea level to 500 meters. It is a distinctive species that forms dense, bushy clusters along with companions like the Greek Spiny Spurge (Euphorbia acanthothamnos), Mediterranean Wild Thyme (Coridothymus capitatus), and others.
Lythraceae	
Pomegranate (*Punica granatum*) 	The Pomegranate is a deciduous shrub or small tree with multiple stems and simple, oblong, and smooth-edged leaves. It has a long history of cultivation for its orange-sized fruit, which is edible, and for its appealing ornamental qualities. The narrow, pointed, oblong-lanceolate leaves, which are glossy green and can grow up to 4 inches long, are arranged either oppositely or in whorls. In cooler climates, the foliage typically turns yellow in the fall. Under favorable conditions, the Pomegranate produces trumpet-shaped, orange-red flowers, each about 1 1/4 inches wide. These flowers bloom throughout the summer, either singly or clustered at the ends of branches. The flowers then develop into orange-sized, leathery-skinned, spherical fruits, measuring 2-4 inches in diameter. These pomegranates contain edible, juicy red seeds. The blooming period is from April to June, with fruit maturation from September to November. Originally from Southwest Asia, the Pomegranate was cultivated and sometimes became naturalized in Mediterranean Greece. Since ancient times, the Pomegranate has been emblematic of rebirth, and its seeds continue to play a significant role in funerary customs.

<u>Mallows family (Malvaceae)</u>	
Tree mallow (*Lavatera arborea*) 	The Tree Mallow is a perennial herb featuring branching stems and clusters of large, purple flowers. Its leaves are heart-shaped with shallow, pointed lobes. These large flowers have prominent darker veins and centers. This plant typically blooms from late March to May. You can often find the Tree Mallow in neglected areas by the sea throughout Mediterranean Greece.
<u>Four o' clock family (Nyctaginaceae)</u>	

Paper flower (*Bougainvillea glabra*) 	The Paper Flower is a woody vine or shrub that is often found adorning house walls in villages of Naxos. It bears small, white true flowers that are accompanied by colorful bracts, which are modified leaves—in the photo, these are shown as red. The plant blooms from spring to autumn. Originating from South America, the Paper Flower has been cultivated in tropical and subtropical regions across the world. Its ability to tolerate drought and thrive in less fertile soils makes it an excellent choice for gardens and landscapes in arid and Mediterranean climate zones. The variation in bract color comes from the wide range of cultivars available.
Passifloraceae family	
Blue passionflower (*Passiflora caerulea*) 	The Blue Passionflower is an herbaceous perennial vine that can reach lengths of up to 30 feet. It is known for its attractive white and purple-blue flowers that can grow to about 4 inches across and bloom in the summer. The plant's shiny leaves typically have five lobes, although they can range from three to nine lobes. After the flowers bloom in the summer, the plant produces egg-sized deep orange fruits that last from late summer through fall. This plant is originally from South America and was introduced to various parts of Europe in the 17th century. While the fruits are edible, they are not particularly delicious when eaten raw; however, they have a taste somewhat reminiscent of blackberries and can be used as a substitute in blackberry pie recipes.
Rose family (Rosaceae)	

Holy bramble (*Rubus sanctus*) 	The Holy Bramble is a deciduous shrub that annually produces a group of prickly, arching biennial stems from its woody rootstock. In the first year, these stems bear only leaves. In the second year, they develop branches that produce flowers, fruit, and then die off post-fruiting. The stems form dense thickets with outward pointing, curved prickles that are wider at the base. The foliage is made up of groups of five leaflets, while the flowers have ovate-triangular sepals and pink petals, with hairy anthers. Flowering occurs from March through December, with fruiting from August to December. The mature fruit is fleshy and black, consisting of multiple small drupelets. This plant often forms roadside thickets and can also be found on field margins, along creek banks, and in disturbed areas. It grows at elevations ranging from sea level to 900 meters, occasionally up to 1600 meters on the mainland. The Holy Bramble's leaves are used as an herbal tea for pain relief and rheumatic healing. Dried and crushed young shoots from Rubus species have been used to treat wounds, infected insect bites, and pimples. In addition to its medicinal uses, the plant is also gathered from the wild for local consumption.
Grapes family (Vitaceae)	

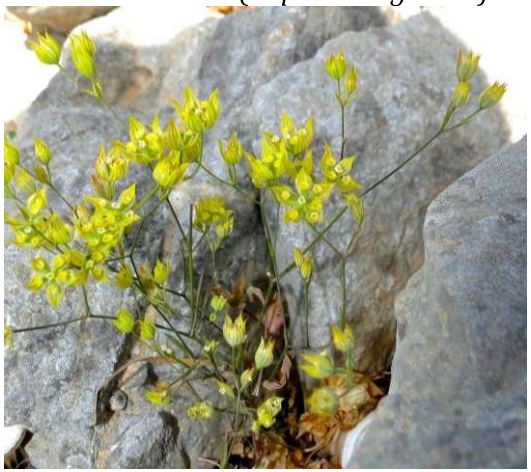
Wild grapevine (*Vitis vinifera* subsp. *sylvestris*) 	The wild grapevine is a climbing, woody plant that is dioecious, meaning male and female flowers grow on separate plants. It has distinctive lobed and toothed leaves. The vine produces small, greenish flowers arranged in dense stalked clusters located opposite the leaves. It blooms from May to June. The berries are globose, blackish, and have an acidic taste. This wild grapevine species is the ancestor of the cultivated grapevines and can be found scrambling over trees and shrubs in ravines and along riverbanks, especially in northern Greece. The fruit has been harvested for its medicinal and nutritional value for thousands of years, with a history closely linked to winemaking. Large quantities of fruit are typically produced in early summer.

Flora:

Onion family (Alliaceae)	
Wild leek (*Allium ampeloprasum*) 	The Wild Leek is a bulbous perennial herb featuring a robust and tall stem with coarse margins on the leaves. This plant is known for its large, thick, and fleshy bulbs. It produces a tight cluster of small, cup-shaped flowers arranged in a spherical umbel at the stem's summit, with colors ranging from white to pink or deep red. The Wild Leek blooms from May to July. This plant is commonly found in a variety of open landscapes, including meadows and hillsides, up to an elevation of 1200 meters in the Aegean Islands. The bulbs of the Wild Leek are larger than those found in many other garlic species and can be used in culinary preparations similarly to other garlic and onion family members.

Golden garlic (*Allium luteolum*) 	Golden Garlic is a bulbous perennial herb endemic to the Cyclades, typically found in rocky areas and scrubland. It features a basal rosette of narrow, linear leaves that emerge directly from the bulb. The plant has upright, leafless stems crowned with umbels of bright yellow flowers, which are grouped in a round cluster. The blooming period is from April to May. Like other relatives in the Allium genus, Golden Garlic produces a distinctive garlic or onion aroma, especially noticeable when the leaves or bulbs are crushed or otherwise damaged.
Amaranth family (Amaranthaceae)	

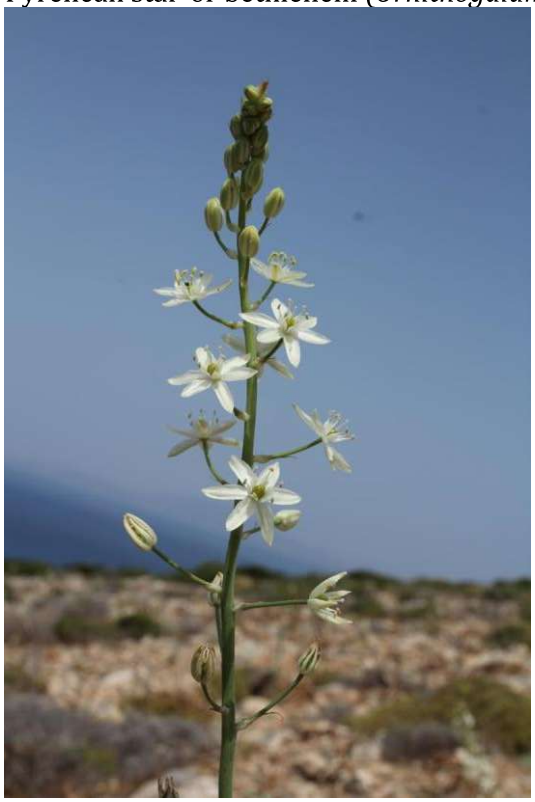
Perennial glasswort (*Sarcocornia perennis*) 	The Perennial Glasswort is a succulent perennial herb known for its fleshy, segmented stems and small, scale-like leaves. This plant has both low creeping stems that root at the nodes and upright stems. The flowers are small and generally inconspicuous, ranging in color from greenish to reddish-brown, and they cluster at the tips of the stems. The flowering season occurs from late summer to early fall. Commonly found in salt marshes across most of Greece, the Perennial Glasswort's thick stems are adept at storing water, enabling the plant to cope with the high salt levels often present in its soil environment. This adaptation not only helps the plant survive but also allows it to contribute to stabilizing coastal ecosystems, particularly in areas that are susceptible to erosion and flooding. Culinary-wise, the tender young shoots of the Perennial Glasswort can be pickled or cooked and enjoyed as a vegetable. Furthermore, the plant has been harnessed in traditional medicine for its various beneficial extracts.
Fig-marigold family (Aizoaceae)	
Hottentot-fig (*Carpobrotus edulis*) 	The Hottentot-Fig is a creeping, mat-forming succulent that spreads across the ground with its stems. It has large, narrow, and fleshy leaves that taper to a point. The plant is known for its prominent solitary flowers, which are 5-12 cm in diameter and feature numerous yellow or pink petals. It flowers from March to June, and sometimes later. Originally from South Africa, the Hottentot-Fig has been planted for ornamental purposes and has become locally naturalized in coastal habitats of the Ionian Islands and the Aegean region. The plant typically grows on coastal rocks and sand, along roadsides, and in disturbed sites, at elevations ranging from sea level to 30 meters, sometimes up to 500 meters. Traditionally, in South Africa, various parts of the Hottentot-Fig are used in medicinal practices. For instance, it is used as an enema for children and those with allergies or diabetes. Its fruits and flowers are consumed raw or cooked to treat fungal and bacterial infections. Additionally, ingestion of the leaves can aid in resolving digestive issues, and the juice can be used to soothe sore throats.

Nodding iceplant (*Mesembryanthemum nodiflorum*) 	The Nodding Iceplant is a low-growing, spreading succulent perennial that forms dense mats or carpets. It is effective in stabilizing sandy soils and reducing erosion. The plant's stems are prostrate and can root at the nodes, which allows the plant to spread across the ground. Its leaves are narrow, fleshy, and bear a bluish-green hue. The small, daisy-like flowers feature white to pale pink petals and are typically borne either singly or in clusters at the tips of the stems. The heads of the flowers tend to tilt downward, creating the plant's distinctive "nodding" look. The flowering period is from late spring to early summer. This plant is commonly found in coastal habitats of the Aegean region. Species in the Mesembryanthemum genus, to which the Nodding Iceplant belongs, are often grown as ornamental plants because of their attractive and colorful flowers.
Carrot family (Apiaceae)	
Slender hare's ear (*Bupleurum gracile*) 	The Slender Hare's-Ear is a perennial herb with yellowish-green flowers that gather in compound umbels at the summit of its slender, straight stem. The foliage ranges from linear to lanceolate, and these leaves are arranged alternately along the length of the stem. There are specialized leaves called an involucre at the point where the compound umbel starts, which are lanceolate in shape and feature whitish-yellow edges. Each primary umbel splits into 4-8 erect rays, and beneath each ray, there's a secondary umbel topped with a waxy, leaf-like structure known as an involucel, divided into five segments. Each segment displays three dark green stripes and a brownish coloring at the tip. The florets at the center of each secondary umbel are white, while the surrounding ones are yellow. The Slender Hare's-Ear blooms from April to May and is native to Naxos, where it commonly grows in grasslands, meadows, and open woodlands. The roots of some Bupleurum species have been utilized in traditional Chinese medicine.

Wild carrot (*Daucus carota*) 	The Wild Carrot is an herbaceous plant with a sturdy, solid stem and finely divided, twice-pinnate leaves. It has white flowers arranged in large, umbrella-like clusters known as umbels. The leaf segments are ovate-oblong and toothed. The outermost flowers in the umbel are white and have an enlarged, two-lobed petal, while the inner flowers are often pink. The fruit is elliptic in shape and covered in spines. This plant blooms all year round and is commonly found in coastal areas, dry pastures, along roadsides, and on waste ground, from sea level up to 900 meters, and even higher elevations up to 1400 meters on the mainland. While the root of the Wild Carrot is edible when young, it quickly becomes woody and tough with age. Occasionally, the flowers are battered and fried as a delicacy. The leaves and seeds are edible as well. Notably, when freshly cut, the flower head of the Wild Carrot can absorb or change color based on the dyed water it is placed in, making for a popular elementary school science experiment. (Photo Source: Wikipedia, Evans, Gaspar)
Sweet fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) 	Sweet Fennel is a tall, smooth (glabrous), aromatic perennial plant with yellow flowers arranged in terminal compound umbels and soft, feathery, dill-like leaves that resemble filaments. The leaves are divided three to four times, resulting in very thin, thread-like segments. Each umbel consists of 10-30 long rays that are almost equal in length. The plant flowers from July to October. It is commonly found in dry, grassy or stony areas across the Mediterranean regions of Greece, at elevations from sea level up to 900 meters, and up to 1300 meters on the mainland. Fennel is widely cultivated for its flavorful leaves and seeds, which are used in cooking. Ancient Greeks and Romans utilized it both as a medicine and as an insect repellent. Fennel tea was historically consumed to embolden warriors before battle.

Wild parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*) 	The Wild Parsnip is a tall, biennial herb with a thick, yellowish or brownish taproot. It features a compound inflorescence known as an umbel, which is quite broad, measuring 10-20 cm across. The flowering stems can grow up to 2 meters high and are grooved, with sparse hairs, hollow, and often branched at the top. The petioles, or leaf stalks, are also grooved and widen at the base to wrap around the stem. The alternately arranged leaves are compound, being either once or twice split into leaflets and can grow up to 40 cm long. As the leaves ascend the stem, they become smaller and less divided, eventually turning into narrow, stem-clinging bracts. The plant's fruits are dry, flattened ovals called schizocarps, which eventually split into two straw-colored to light brown, strongly-flattened sections commonly referred to as seeds. When crushed, the plant releases a distinct parsnip smell. The portion eaten is the long root, which extends 25-38 cm and has a broad top. Parsnips endure cold weather very well and can survive being frozen in the ground. Many people say the roots, which are white to whitish-yellow, taste sweeter after being exposed to frost.

Shepherd’s needle (*Pimpinella peregrina*) 	The Shepherd's Needle is an annual or biennial herb with a slender, branched stem that bears only a few leaves. The lower leaves are round and pinnate, while the upper leaves are composed of narrow segments. The plant boasts umbels with numerous small white flowers, which bloom from late May to July. It is typically found in grasslands and abandoned areas in Naxos.
Cretan parsley (*Smyrnium creticum*) 	The Cretan Parsley is a perennial herb with leaves that clasp the stem and have serrated edges. It features small yellow-green flowers that gather in umbrella-like clusters at the top of its upright stem. The plant blooms from April to July and is native to the Mediterranean region, where it usually thrives in rocky coastal areas, scrublands, and open woodlands.
Asparagus family (Asparagaceae)	

Pyrenean star-of-bethlehem (*Ornithogalum narbonense*) 	The Pyrenean Star-of-Bethlehem is a bulbous perennial herb characterized by its narrow, lanceolate basal leaves and numerous milky-white, star-shaped flowers that form an elongated-cylindrical inflorescence at the top of its tall, slender stem, which can reach up to 60 cm in height. Each flower is distinguished by a green stripe running down the center of its outer segments. The blooms are often fragrant, emitting a subtle sweet scent. This plant flowers from April to June and is commonly found in the eastern Aegean Islands.

Ornithogalum naxense 	This particular Star-of-Bethlehem species is a dwarf bulbous perennial herb featuring a short stem bearing 3 to 6 star-shaped white flowers. Star-shaped flowers are clustered at the top of slender stalks. Each of them has six white petals with a greenish stripe down the center of each. It blooms from April to June. The plant is a relatively rare and localized species on the island of Naxos, and usually grows in rocky habitats and on limestone slopes.
Aspleniaceae	
Rusty-back fern (*Asplenium ceterach*) 	The Rusty-Back Fern has a short rhizome from which pinnate leaves grow, featuring grey-brown hairs on their undersides, but not on the top. The leaf stalk, or petiole, is shorter than the leaf blade itself. The leaves range in size from 5 to 15 cm and have multiple short, ovate, and blunt lobes. They are dark green and smooth on the upper surface. This fern typically inhabits cliffs and rocky places, often found on limestone substrates. Although it can tolerate dry conditions, it usually grows in areas with some shade and can be found at elevations of up to 2000 meters throughout most of Greece. Historically, the Rusty-Back Fern has been used for its anti-inflammatory and diuretic properties and has been a traditional remedy for dissolving kidney stones for centuries.
Daisy family (Asteraceae)	

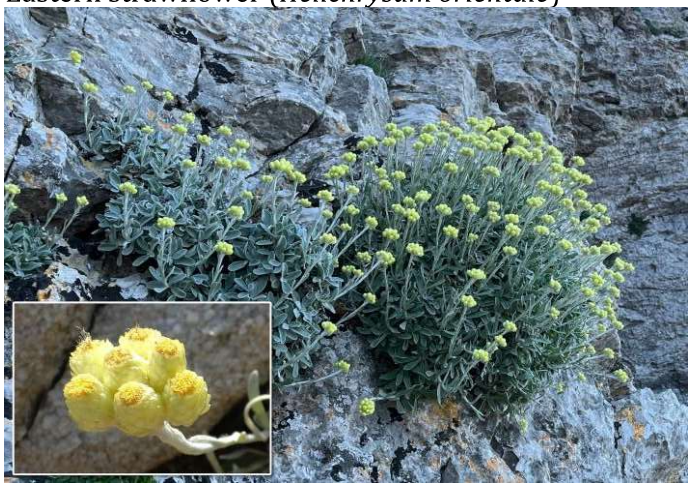
Egyptian yarrow (*Achillea aegyptiaca*) 	The Egyptian Yarrow is a perennial herb known for its finely divided, lance-shaped leaves and compact heads of yellow flowers. The leaves release a pleasant aroma when crushed. Each flower head is made up of numerous small, yellow florets. The plant typically blooms from June to August. Commonly found in dry, rocky areas, the Egyptian Yarrow is also occasionally cultivated in gardens for its ornamental appeal. As with other Achillea species, the Egyptian Yarrow has a long history of use in traditional herbal medicine, with applications ranging from healing wounds to alleviating digestive problems.
Cliff chamomile (*Anthemis scopulorum*) 	The Cliff Chamomile is a perennial herb with a low, spreading growth form that can create dense mats or foliage clumps. Its leaves are finely divided and have a grayish-green hue. The plant features daisy-like flowers with yellow disc florets, which have a swollen appearance at the base. Its blooming period is from April to May. This herb is native to rocky environments such as cliffs and slopes in the mountainous areas of Greece. Currently, the Cliff Chamomile is an endemic species in the Aegean islands and faces a significant risk of extinction. Efforts to conserve its natural habitats are crucial to prevent the loss of this unique species.

Golden star (*Asteriscus aquaticus*) 	The Golden Star is a dichotomously branching annual herb distinguished by its yellow flower heads, each subtended by oblong to linear leaves. The yellow flowers have short ligules, and the green bracts are large, spreading, linear-lanceolate, and blunt at the ends. This herb blooms from March through May. It thrives in various habitats including rocky and loamy coastal areas, dry pastures, garigue, field margins, and wastelands, and is found at elevations up to 450 meters in the Mediterranean regions of Greece. The plant was originally named Bupthalmum aquaticum, which translates to 'sweet-scented ox eye,' indicative of its pleasant aroma and ox eye-like flowers.
Cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*) 	The Cornflower is an annual herb recognized for its slender and erect branched stem and narrow leaves. Its blue flowers are notable for their striking, intense blue hue, which is complemented by a set of overlapping bracts that create a spiky exterior. Typically, each vibrant blue bloom is found on its own at the top of a long stem. The plant flowers from May to June. Commonly seen in cornfields and dry, rocky areas, the Cornflower is also valued for its broad horticultural appeal. Aside from ornamental cultivation, cornflowers serve as a natural dye for textiles and are employed for various culinary uses. In cultural traditions, cornflowers symbolize tenderness, love, and loyalty, often featuring in folklore and literature where they represent affection and good fortune.

Knapweed (*Centaurea spinosa*) 	The Knapweed is a small, low-growing, hemispherical shrub with a grayish-green hue and numerous spiny branches. Its leaves are lobed and also spiny. The flower heads, or capitula, are small and pale pink or white, typically appearing alone. This plant blooms from June to July. It is commonly found in coastal habitats such as maritime sands, as well as in garigue on rocky hill slopes on some of the central and eastern Aegean islands, although it does not grow in these specific habitats on Crete. The Knapweed can be found at elevations ranging from sea level up to 700 meters, and occasionally as high as 1400 meters.
Mayflower (*Crepis multiflora*) 	The Mayflower Hawksbeard is a perennial herb that typically reaches a height of 30-80 centimeters. It is native to the Aegean area, where its growth is primarily concentrated. The plant has a basal rosette of toothed leaves, with smaller leaves on the stem that gradually decrease in size towards the top. It produces clusters of numerous small flowers at the ends of its branching stems, blooming from April to June. This plant is commonly encountered in coastal regions, among dry, open, shrubby vegetation, on cliffs, by roadsides, and in various dry, open environments including agricultural areas. Due to its ability to quickly adapt to different surroundings, careful management is necessary to prevent it from spreading and potentially becoming invasive.

Spiny globe-thistle (*Echinops spinosissimus* subsp. *spinosissimus*) 	The plant is a branching perennial herb that can grow up to 80 cm (about 2 feet) tall. Its leaves are dissected into narrow, triangular lobes, each ending in a slender yet stiff spine. The plant is notable for its pale blue or white disc florets, which are arranged in large, spherical heads measuring 3.5 to 7 cm across, though it does not produce ray florets. The protective leaf-like structures, or bracts, surrounding these heads, also feature lengthy terminal spines. This perennial blooms from mid-May to August and thrives in dry, rocky environments in southern Greece, Crete, and the Aegean Islands. Habitats include dry grasslands, roadside verges, and fallow fields, at elevations from sea level up to 1100 meters. Species within the Echinops genus are known to contain a variety of secondary metabolites. These compounds have traditionally been used for medicinal purposes in regions like Africa and Asia.

Field fluffweed (*Filago arvensis*) 	The Field Fluffweed is an annual, herbaceous plant featuring an erect stem that branches at the upper part. Even the branches themselves are erect. It has leaves that are thickly coated with fine hairs, giving the plant a grayish-green appearance. The flowers, which are small and not particularly showy, range in color from yellow to whitish. These flowers are clustered densely at the ends of the branching stems, with each flower head consisting of small tubular florets encased within papery bracts. The Field Fluffweed flowers from July to August. This plant is commonly found in dry, unused, or abandoned spaces and can grow up to elevations of 1700 meters on the mainland of Greece.
Amorgos strawflower (*Helichrysum amorginum*) 	The Amorgos strawflower is a perennial herb with taller stems and bracts that are white or cream in color. It boasts dense, flat flower heads that are about 3-5 cm across. The plant has narrow leaves along the stem with broader leaves at the base, all of which are covered in fine hairs. The small flowers within the heads are typically yellow or gold and densely clustered at the ends of the branches. Each flower head is encased by papery bracts, which are known for holding their color and shape even after the plant has dried. The Strawflower blooms from mid-June to mid-August. This species of Strawflower is an especially narrow endemic, found only on Amorgos and Nikouria Islands in the Cyclades. It typically grows in calcareous crevices and on cliffs.

Eastern strawflower (*Helichrysum orientale*) 	The Eastern strawflower is a perennial herb with broad leaves at the base that carry a fine layer of hairs, yellow bracts, and a silvery-green appearance. The plant features larger capitula, approximately 7-10 mm across, with yellow flowers clustered densely at the tips of branches. The distinctive papery bracts that encircle the flower heads maintain their color even when the plant dies, leading to common names such as "strawflower" or "immortelle". The flowering season extends from April to July. This plant typically flourishes in sunny locations with well-drained soil and is often found in rocky or sandy environments.
Italian strawflower (*Helichrysum stoecha*) 	The Italian Strawflower is a perennial herb characterized by its linear leaves and a generous number of dense yellow bracts. Its stems and leaves are both whitish in color, with the leaves displaying inrolled edges. The plant produces yellow flower heads that measure approximately 4-6 mm across. The flowering season spans from mid-March to late May. Commonly found along beaches, on rocks, and in open scrub areas, the Italian Strawflower can be seen growing up to altitudes of 700 meters in the Mediterranean regions of Greece. Traditionally, it has been utilized in herbal medicine for a range of health-related applications.

Jurinea consanguinea 	The plant is a perennial herb that stands upright and features pink-purple flowers at the head. The leaves along the stem narrow towards the base. It has a pappus—which is the part of the seed that acts like a parachute with barbellate bristles—meaning the bristles have small barbs on them. The involucre, which is the group of bracts (leaves) below the flower, is carried on long, bare stems called peduncles. The plant blooms from the middle of April through June. It typically grows on rocky slopes amidst shrubby vegetation like garigue or maquis, as well as within open coniferous woodlands. It can be found at elevations from sea level up to 800 meters, and as high as 1400 meters on the mainland, particularly on the East Aegean Islands.
Syrian thistle (*Notobasis syriaca*) 	The Syrian Thistle is a tall annual plant with spiny leaves that are white-veined on the top side. The upper leaves of the plant often have a purple tinge and come with long spines, which extend out further than the purple flower heads beneath them. This thistle typically blooms from late March to mid-June. It is commonly found in dry grassy areas, coastal habitats, by roadsides, in olive groves, along field margins, and in wastelands. The plant grows at elevations up to 800 meters in the Mediterranean regions of Greece. The genus name "Notobasis" derives from Greek, with "noton" meaning "back" and "basis" referring to "base" or "pedestal," though this does not accurately reflect the plant's typical habitat and there could be a misinterpretation in the etymology.

Onopordum caulescens 	This thistle is a perennial herb characterized by yellowish stems that can grow up to 50 cm tall. Its leaves are divided into 6-8 pairs of lobes, and it has small flower heads that are up to 3.5 cm wide. Both the stem and mature leaves have a covering of tomentose or lanate, which means they are densely woolly or cottony. The edges of the leaf blades are toothed, and there are spines covering the plant. It blooms from May to July. You can find this thistle growing on field margins, by roadsides, within evergreen scrublands, and in disturbed areas known as ruderal habitats. It occurs at elevations ranging from sea level up to 800 meters in southern and central Greece, as well as on the Aegean Islands.

Taurian thistle (*Onopordum tauricum*) 	The Taurian Thistle is a biennial herb with a tall, sticky and glandular stem that can reach up to 2 meters in height and is covered in spines as well as a yellowish-brown hue. Its spiny leaves are a bright, light green and are divided into 6 to 8 pairs of triangular lobes that are spaced apart. The bracts around the flower are glandular-hairy, and the outer ones curve downward. The plant's inflorescence consists of several large flower heads, each measuring 25-30 mm in diameter. It blooms from June to July. This thistle is found in coastal areas, along roadsides, in dry meadows, and other rural habitats, at elevations from sea level to 800 meters, and can be found up to 1300 meters in most parts of Greece. The specific name 'tauricum' refers to 'bull', highlighting the plant's robust and spiny nature.

Soldier thistle (*Picnomon acarna*) 	The Soldier Thistle is an erect annual that can grow up to 100 cm tall. The branched stem is whitish-green and adorned with long yellow spines, making it quite conspicuous along roadsides. The bases of the leaves extend downwards along the stem, forming wing-like structures. The bracts end in prominent, spine-like tips. Its purple flower heads, known as capitula, are small and arranged in a dense cluster, which is further accented by the surrounding longer spiny leaves. Flowering occurs from July to August. The Soldier Thistle thrives in dry, open areas such as roadsides, wastelands, dry streambeds, and garigue, and is commonly found at elevations up to 1000 meters across mainland Greece and Crete. This plant is used as ground cover and for erosion control due to its drought tolerance and ability to adapt to a wide range of soil conditions.
Prickly golden fleece (*Urosperumum picroides*) 	The Prickly Golden Fleece is a hispid, or bristly, branched annual plant with flower heads that sit atop long, leafless stalks. The stem leaves have toothed or lobed edges with two sharp, ear-like lobes at the base known as auricles. Surrounding the flower, the involucre is bulbous at the base and has hispid bracts arranged in a single layer, which are joined together at the base. This plant flowers early in the year, with the flowers dying off in the summer and transforming into white fluffy seed heads. Its blooming period is from March to June. The Prickly Golden Fleece can be found in seasonally damp locations within garigue, scrublands, cultivated fields, and wastelands. It is common in dry grasslands and waste places at low altitudes in Mediterranean Greece, ranging from sea level to elevations of 700 meters, occasionally reaching up to 1100 meters. In Greek, the plant is called "agriozohos," and its leaves and shoots are commonly consumed boiled in salads.

Borage family (Boraginaceae)	
Red bugloss (*Echium angustifolium*) 	The Red Bugloss, also known as Narrow-Leaved Bugloss, is a perennial plant that is short to medium in height and covered in grey bristles. It has a large, funnel-shaped corolla that is pinkish-red and turns violet as it matures. The plant has erect to sprawling stems that are heavily branched. Its leaves are narrow and covered with dense white bristles, giving them a rough texture, and the edges of the leaves are often wavy. The Red Bugloss blooms from April to May and can be found in dry grasslands and on sandy soils by the sea in Mediterranean Greece. The term "angustifolium" in its name means "narrow-leaved," and "bugloss" is derived from the Greek words meaning "ox tongue," which refers to the roughness of the leaves that is reminiscent of an ox's tongue.
Mustard family (Brassicaceae)	
Greek cabbage (*Brassica cretica*) 	The Greek Cabbage is a sizeable perennial herb known for forming a rosette at its base and reaching heights of up to 1 meter. It features a robust, woody stem and smooth, pinnatifid, bluish-green leaves which have a waxy coating to minimize water loss. The flowers, which are white or yellowish, are organized in upright clusters called terminal racemes. The plant flowers from March to June. You can find the Greek Cabbage on limestone cliffs and rocky outcrops at elevations up to 700 meters within the Aegean region. While its leaves can be consumed raw in salads or cooked like other nutritious leafy greens, it is not as commonly grown or used as other Brassica species such as cabbage or kale.

Shortpod mustard (*Brassica incana*) 	The shortpod mustard is a native perennial herb from the Mediterranean region, but it is also found widely around the world as an abundant and troublesome weed. It features basal leaves with hairy or bristly stems. The upper part of the stem is adorned with many small yellow flowers. These flowers have four petals, often displaying purple veins in clusters. The fruit is small, erect, and pressed close to the stem, measuring up to 17 mm in length. This plant blooms from April to June. You can frequently find short pod mustard growing along roadsides, in field margins, orchards, and various man-made habitats. It is occasionally found in phrygana throughout Greece. The plant is common across Greece except in the far northwest and northeast regions. In some parts of Greece, the young shortpod mustard plant is consumed with oil and lemon juice. Its leaves have been traditionally used as a leafy vegetable. Additionally, the seeds can be ground into a powder, mixed with water, and eaten.

Garden rocket (*Eruca vesicaria*) 	The Garden Rocket is an annual herb known for its robust stem and deeply lobed or pinnatifid leaves, which have a serrated look. The dark green leaves spread out from a central point at the plant's base. At the ends of the upright flowering stems, you will find large clusters of flowers with white or pale yellow petals that feature violet veins. The plant flowers from March to May. This herb is often found in open coastal areas and waste places at low altitudes throughout the Aegean region. Known for its peppery flavor, Garden Rocket leaves are commonly added to salads, sandwiches, pasta dishes, and pizzas. They are also valued for their nutritional content—being low in calories yet high in vitamins and minerals—contributing to various health benefits. The Garden Rocket can sometimes be found growing near villages.
Virginia stock (*Malcomia maritima*) 	The Virginia Stock is a branched annual herb known for its slender, dark green leaves, which are hairy at the base and divided into 3-5 segments. This plant produces small flowers that are densely arranged into clusters at the ends of its upright stems. The flowers feature four petals and come in a range of colors, from white to pink or lavender, and they bloom from March to June. The Virginia Stock is commonly found along sandy and rocky coastlines and in dry habitats, thriving at elevations up to 600 meters in the southern and western coastal areas of Greece. In the evening, the plant is noted for its strong and pleasant fragrance. Because of its vibrant flowers and ease of care, Virginia Stock is frequently cultivated in gardens, flower borders, and containers.

Sea stock (*Matthiola sinuata*) 	The Sea Stock is a perennial with a white, hairy surface and a bushy growth habit. It has numerous basal leaves that are notable for their wavy or lobed edges. The leaves' grayish-green color, often wavy or sinuate margins, and fine hairs contribute to the plant's distinctive appearance. Pink flowers are organized into dense, elongated racemes at the tips of the stems. The plant blooms from March to June. Typically, the Sea Stock is found in coastal rocky areas, and in stony or sandy terrain within the Aegean region. The genus name, Matthiola, is a tribute to Pierandrea Matthioli, who was a renowned 16th-century Italian physician and botanist, and the species name 'sinuata' refers to the wavy edges of the leaves, derived from the Latin term for "wavy margin."
Bellflower family (Campanulaceae)	
Variable-leaved bellflower (*Campanula heterophylla*) 	The Variable-Leaved Bellflower is a perennial herb that is notable for its basal rosette of leaves and upright, branched stems that carry the flowers. The stems are usually short, covered in fine hairs, and can have a reddish hue. The leaves are also hairy and feature toothed or serrated edges. The flowers of this plant are bell-shaped, typically blue or violet, with five lobes, and a distinct yellow pistil that stands out in the center. It flowers from April to June. This bellflower is a rare endemic species found only on Amorgos and Keros Islands. It thrives in mountainous or rocky areas, such as alpine meadows, edges of woodlands, and rocky inclines.

Snogerup's venus' looking-glass (*Legousia snogerupii*) 	Snogerup's Venus' Looking-Glass is an annual or biennial herb that commonly features branched stems, which can reach heights of up to 40 cm. The flowers each have five petals that are joined together at the base, showcasing blue or violet edges and predominantly white centers. These petals form a bell-like shape. The plant flowers from April to July. Native to Greece, this plant typically grows in grassy, open, and dry stony environments. It is recognized as an endemic species to the Aegean region.
Pink family (Caryophyllaceae)	

Cinnamon pink (*Dianthus cinnamomeus*) 	The Cinnamon Pink is a low-growing perennial herb that forms dense tufts of leaves and flowers. It has slender, wiry stems and narrow, linear leaves that are grayish-green, predominantly clustered at the base of the plant. The flowers vary in color from white to purplish-red and feature fringed or toothed edges, along with a spicy, clover-like fragrance. The peak blooming period is from May to June. This plant is typically encountered in rocky and stony areas within the Cyclades Islands. The Cinnamon Pink is favored as an ornamental plant in gardens due to its aesthetically pleasing flowers and neat, low-growing form.
Rock-roses family (Cistaceae)	
Thyme broom (*Fumana thymifolia*) 	The Thyme Broom is a dwarf perennial shrub that is extensively branched, with slender, woody stems that have a reddish hue. It features numerous small, linear leaves arranged oppositely, resembling those of thyme. These leaves have margins that are curled inward. The shrub boasts small, bright yellow flowers, each typically with five petals, grouped in relaxed clusters at the branch ends. The Thyme Broom flowers from mid-March to early May. This plant commonly thrives in dry, rocky areas with soils that are well-drained and low in nutrients. Its natural habitats include coastal cliffs, rocky slopes, and scrublands and it can be found at elevations up to 1000 meters in the Mediterranean region of Greece. The Thyme Broom is often appreciated for its decorative appeal and ease of care, making it a popular choice in rock gardens and for dry garden borders.

Morning-glories (Convolvulaceae)	
Field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*) 	The field bindweed is a perennial herb with creeping and twining stems, leaves shaped like arrowheads or halberds, and bell or funnel-shaped flowers that are white or pale pink. The flowers grow from the leaf axils on stalks that are longer than the leaves themselves. This plant flowers from April to September. It typically grows along stream banks, by roadsides, and in fallow as well as cultivated fields, and can be found at altitudes up to 1900 meters throughout most of Greece. Field bindweed is a species native to Europe and Siberia but has been introduced and become a problematic weed in temperate regions around the globe. One of the main challenges with field bindweed is its extensive rhizome system, which can penetrate deeply into the soil and survive for 20 or more years. This makes the plant exceedingly difficult to eliminate once it has taken hold in an area.
Pink bindweed (*Convolvulus oleifolius*) 	The Pink Bindweed is a shrubby perennial herb known for its trailing or climbing growth. Its stems are slender and often twine, enabling the plant to ascend or spread across neighboring plants or structures. The leaves are linear and greyish-green, varying in shape from lanceolate to ovate, with a smooth feel. The plant produces funnel-shaped flowers that are either white or pink. It blooms from March to early August. This plant is typically found on limestone rocks near the sea and can grow at altitudes up to 500 meters in Southern Greece.
Stonecrop family (Crassulaceae)	

Coastal stonecrop (*Sedum litoreum*) 	The coastal stonecrop is a small, smooth, and brightly green annual plant that can grow to a height of around 0.037 meters. It features flowers arranged in long, loose spikes. Each flower is star-shaped with five petals and sepals that are partially fused at the base. The plant has between five and ten stamens, which are sometimes red. The yellow petals sharply taper to a pointed tip. The coastal stonecrop blooms in April and May. This plant thrives in rocky and stony environments, and it can be found at elevations of up to 900 meters in the Aegean area and the Ionian Islands.
Rock rose family (Cuscutaceae)	
Clover dooder (*Cuscuta epithymum*) 	The Clover Dodder is a parasitic flowering plant with thin, winding, orange or reddish stems. It tends to cling to other plants, such as Conehead Thyme (Thymbra capitatus), wrapping around them and creating dense entwinements. When Clover Dodder seeds spread and start to grow, the emerging seedlings must quickly locate and attach to a suitable host to survive. This plant has minimal foliage, with leaves reduced to mere scales on its stems. It features small, bell-shaped, pinkish-white flowers, which are fragrant and cluster together. The flowering season lasts from June to September. Typically, the Clover Dodder is found in dry grasslands and can be seen as high as 2100 meters in elevation, often parasitizing plants from the Lamiaceae family. In medieval times, it was used medicinally to treat melancholy, though consumption could induce thirst and mouth dryness.

Pea/Legumes family (Fabaceae)	
Lucerne/Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa* subsp. *sativa*) 	Lucerne, also known as alfalfa, is an upright perennial herb that has oblong leaflets and dense, oblong flower heads that are typically violet-blue. Its root system is extensive, normally extending down to 4 meters, but in well-drained soils, it can reach depths of 7-9 meters. The inflorescences are either oval or rounded clusters, known as racemes, and these can bear anywhere from 5 to 40 flowers that may be yellow, blue, or purple. Lucerne blooms from late May to October and produces seed pods that coil into 2-3 loose spirals. This plant commonly grows in meadows and is found up to 1300 meters in elevation across mainland Greece. It is widely cultivated as a fodder crop due to its nutritional value and is utilized for grazing, hay, and silage. Lucerne also serves the purpose of a green manure and cover crop, thanks to its ability to fix nitrogen in the soil.
Narrow-leaved clover (*Trifolium angustifolium*) 	The Narrow-Leaved Clover is an annual herb with pink, small flowers gathered in terminal, solitary, long cylindrical heads. Notable for its elongated flower heads, this plant also has a hairy calyx. Its leaflets are slender and linear in shape. The flower's corolla is either the same length or shorter than the calyx teeth, which are almost smooth near the tip. It typically blooms from mid-April to early July. You can find this clover in dry meadows, along roadsides, and on field margins, at altitudes ranging from sea level up to 800 meters, and sometimes up to 1600 meters in the mainland areas. Traditionally, the Narrow-Leaved Clover has been used to treat diarrhea and to soothe stomach aches. （Photo Source: Wikipedia, Martin）

Strawberry clover (*Trifolium physodes*) 	The Strawberry Clover is a smooth, hairless perennial herb distinguished by its leaflets, which often feature variegated patterns of darker and lighter patches on the upper side. Its flowers are pink or whitish and form a round cluster, with the calyx becoming inflated as the fruit develops. The fruiting calyx is hairy on its back. The blooming period for the Strawberry Clover extends from late March through July. This plant grows in a variety of habitats, including garigue, open woodlands, ravines, rocky outcrops, and meadows. It can be found at elevations up to about 2000 meters throughout much of Greece.
Sibthorp's vetch (*Vicia sibthorpii*) 	The Sibthorp's Vetch is a perennial herb that is densely covered with hairs. It is known for its attractive clusters of bluish-purple flowers that bloom on elongated spikes. Its compound leaves are also hairy and often end in tendrils that help the plant to climb and secure itself. The flowering period is from late April to June. This species of vetch is typically found in dry grasslands at elevations between 300 and 800 meters. Like its legume relatives, Sibthorp's Vetch has the ability to fix nitrogen in the soil through its partnership with nitrogen-fixing bacteria housed in its root nodules. This process is beneficial for enhancing soil fertility and promoting the growth of neighboring plants.
Gentian family (Gentianaceae)	

Common centaury (*Centaurium erythraea*) 	The Common Centaury is a small annual or biennial herb featuring an erect, four-sided stem with branches that also stand upright. The leaves at the base of the plant are ovate and form a rosette, while the stem leaves are oblong. Notably, the upper leaves are shorter than the lower ones, distinguishing this plant from the Slender Centaury (Centaurium tenuiflorum). It blooms small, pink flowers with five petals that are joined at the base into a tube-like shape, all packed tightly into dense heads, from May to July. The Common Centaury is typically found in grasslands and moist areas, growing at altitudes up to 2000 meters in mainland Greece and the Eastern Aegean Islands. It has been valued for its medicinal uses since ancient times and throughout the Middle Ages. The name of the genus, 'centaurium,' stems from the Latin word 'Centaurus,' relating to the centaur Chiron from Greek mythology, who was famed for his knowledge of herbal healing. The species name 'erythraea' comes from a Greek word red, referring to the hue of the plant's flowers.

Slender centaury (*Centaurium tenuiflorum*) 	The Slender Centaury is a small and delicate annual herb that typically reaches heights of 10-30 cm. It features a slender, upright stem with branching occurring near the top. Unlike the Common Centaury (Centaurium erythraea), this plant usually does not have a leaf rosette at the time of flowering. The upper stem leaves are longer than the lower ones, which helps to distinguish it from its relative. It produces small, star-shaped flowers with five petals, generally in shades of pink to purple. These flowers bloom from June to August. You can often find the Slender Centaury in damp, coastal environments in southern and central Greece, including areas in Crete and the Aegean Islands.
Geraniaceae family	

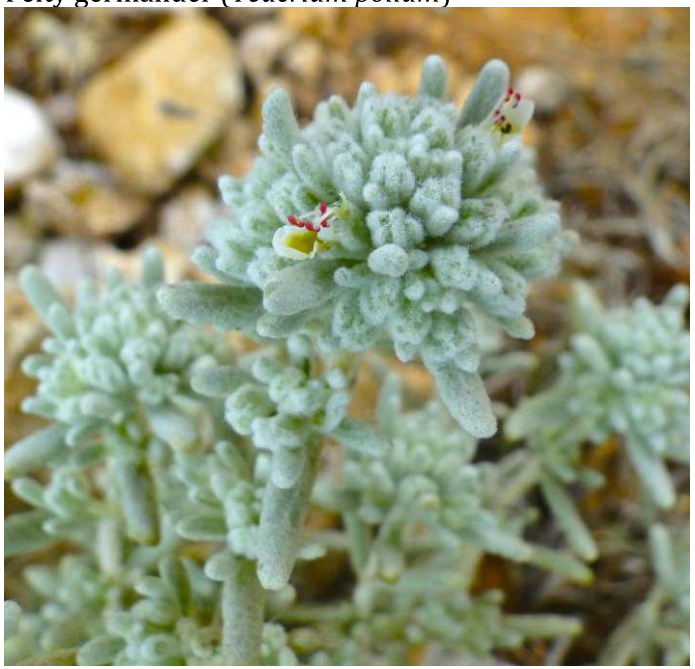
Little robin (*Geranium purpureum*) 	The Little Robin is an annual or biennial herb celebrated for its charming rose-pink flowers with yellow anthers. It has bright green, fern-like, lobed leaves that turn reddish when the plant is exposed to full sun or as it ages, adding to its striking appearance in rocky clearings. The stems range in color from green to maroon red, are brittle, and are covered with hairs. The flowers, which typically grow in pairs, feature five oval petals adorned with white stripes. The Little Robin blooms from March through July. It can be found in a variety of habitats, including phrygana (Mediterranean scrubland), open woodlands, olive groves, dry streambeds, gravelly roadsides, hedges, and woodland margins. It thrives at elevations up to 1300 meters across most of Greece. The genus name "Geranium" comes from the Greek word "geranos," meaning "crane," a nod to the plant's fruit, which resembles the head and beak of a crane. (Photo Source: Wikipedia, Xaver)
John's-wort family (Hypericaceae)	

Common St. John’s wort (*Hypericum perforliatum*) 	The Common St. John's Wort is a perennial and smooth (glabrous) herb known for its yellow flowers edged with distinctive black glands. It has erect stems marked by two distinct lines. The leaves are bluish-green (glaucous), ovate-lanceolate, rather blunt (obtuse), and heart-shaped (cordate) at the base, somewhat wrapping around the stem, and dotted with translucent spots and black glands. The flowers are arranged in tightly packed clusters at the end of the stem. Both the sepals and petals are blunt and adorned with dense black spots. Anthers on the flowers also have black glands. The fruit is egg-shaped and bears orange-tinted swellings. This plant typically flowers in May. It thrives on rocky slopes with scrub and maquis vegetation, in grassy meadows, and in open woodlands, from sea level up to 1900 meters, across various soil types. St. John's Wort, scientifically known as Hypericum perforatum, has a long history as a medicinal herb dating back to ancient Greece, where it was used to treat a variety of ailments, including disorders of the nervous system. (Photo Source: Wikipedia, Lefnaer)
Iris family (Iridaceae)	

Field gladiolus (*Gladiolus italicus*) 	The Field Gladiolus is a perennial herb with tall, erect, sword-shaped leaves along a stem that can reach a height of up to 1 meter. The flowers are pink and organized into a spike-like formation, with the anthers being longer than the filaments. This plant typically blooms from late March to May. The Gladiolus is widespread and can be found in grasslands and open scrub areas throughout most of Greece, at altitudes up to 750 meters. Its appealing flowers and long-lasting nature when cut make it a popular choice for floral arrangements and bouquets.

Tall bearded iris (*Iris germanica*) 	The Tall Bearded Iris is a perennial herb known for its large violet-blue flowers and sword-shaped leaves, which stand erect and can reach up to 70 cm in length. Each flower consists of six perianth segments: the three drops, or lower petals, are purple with brown veins and white bases that feature yellow 'beards'; the three upright petals, or standards, are a lilac color. The flowering stalks can grow up to 3 feet tall and usually produce up to six flowers each during the spring, with the blooming period extending from April to June. This iris is typically found in dry, stony, and rocky habitats at elevations between 500 and 2000 meters, ranging from the northern Peloponnese to the northwest and north-central regions of Greece. In Greek mythology, Iris represents the personification of the rainbow and acts as the messenger of the gods, which reflects the wide range of colors in which this plant can be found. The Tall Bearded Iris spreads through its creeping rhizomes, which can lead to the formation of large clusters over time. (Photo Source: Kew, Sheremetyev)
Mint family (Lamiaceae)	
Penny-royal (*Mentha pulegium*) 	Pennyroyal is a perennial herb that stays low to the ground. It possesses small, opposite leaves that emit a potent minty scent upon being crushed. The flowers are petite, with shades ranging from pink to purple, clustered tightly in distinct, rounded whorls. The plant typically blooms from June to September. Pennyroyal commonly thrives in moist grasslands, and it can be found at altitudes between 400 and 1300 meters in mainland Greece and the Eastern Aegean Islands. It has a long history of use as a medicinal herb by ancient Egyptians and Greeks. Aside from its medicinal use, pennyroyal was frequently employed as a spice in cooking and to add fragrance to wines.

Greek oregano (*Origanum vulgare* subsp. *hirtum*) 	Greek Oregano, also known as Winter Sweet Marjoram, is a robust perennial plant commonly cultivated in herb gardens for its dark green, aromatic leaves, which are used in cooking. The plant has erect stems ranging from 30 to 80 cm tall, and features ovate or elliptic leaves that are attached to the stems. Its flowers are small, pink or purple, and are clustered densely at the tips of the stems, with purple bracts at the base. Greek Oregano blooms from late June to early September. This plant thrives in a variety of habitats, including woodland edges, open scrublands, rocky areas within the garigue, and meadows. It is typically found at elevations from sea level up to 800 meters but can grow as high as 2150 meters on the mainland of Greece. Greek Oregano is widely harvested for its culinary uses, particularly for seasoning grilled meats and a variety of other dishes.
Teucrium divaricatum 	This mint family member is a perennial herb with sturdy, upright stems that can reach up to 50 cm in height. Its leaves are slightly fleshy or leathery, with toothed or lobed edges. When the leaves are crushed, they release a cocoa-like aroma. The flowers, which are purple, appear in erect, long, and loose spikes. True to the Teucrium genus, the petals are fused into a single lower lip. This plant flowers from May to July. You can find it in dry scrublands and olive groves at elevations up to 1600 meters in the Aegean Islands. It's most commonly found in the mountainous areas of the Mediterranean region. The plant is traditionally brewed into a tea for various folk medicinal purposes. Teucrium species are traditionally used to treat colds, reduce fever, and alleviate coughs, sore throats, and hoarseness.

Felty germander (*Teucrium polium*) 	The Felty Germander is a perennial shrublet with erect, short, woody stems that have a whitish appearance. Its leaves are small, narrow, and grey-green on the top, while the undersides are whitish. Both surfaces are covered with fine hairs, resulting in a grayish-green color and a felt-like texture for the entire plant. The tubular flowers, which are small and white or cream-colored, are attractive to pollinators such as bees. This shrublet flowers from May to July. It is native to the Mediterranean region, thriving in dry, stony, or rocky grassland areas, at elevations ranging from 100 to 2000 meters, from southern Greece through the northwest and north-central parts of the country. Historically, the Felty Germander has been employed in traditional medicine for a variety of purposes, including the treatment of digestive issues, respiratory conditions, and skin ailments.
Mallow family (Malvaceae)	

Cornish mallow (*Malva multiflora*) 	The Cornish Mallow is an annual or biennial herb that is extensively branched and produces clusters of flowers. The plant has a downy texture due to its often star-shaped hairs and features large blooms. Its lower leaves are rounded, whereas the upper leaves are divided into five deep, sharp, triangular lobes. The lilac flowers showcase darker veins and sit on very short stems. The additional outer whorl of sepals, called the epicalyx, is slightly shorter than the main calyx, and the three epicalyx lobes typically join at the base. The Cornish Mallow blooms from March to May. It is commonly found in grassy wastelands, sandy coastal areas, along field margins and roadsides, in olive groves, and on unused land across the Mediterranean regions of Greece. The plant thrives at elevations from sea level up to 400 meters, and occasionally as high as 700 meters. (Photo Source: Wikipedia, Bamikra)
Orchids (Orchidaceae)	

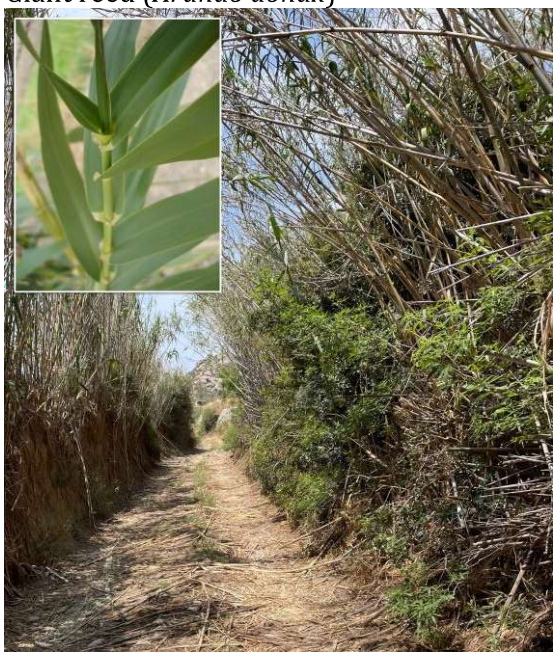
Jersey orchid (*Anacamptis laxiflora*) 	The Jersey Orchid is a tall, slender orchid that grows from the ground. It features a single stem adorned with narrow, upright basal leaves. The flowers are dark purple and arranged alternately up the stem, with each individual bloom sporting a long, upwardly arching, and curved spur. This orchid flowers from April to June. Found throughout Greece, the Jersey Orchid thrives in damp meadows, ranging up to elevations of 1500 meters. The genus name "Anacamptis" is derived from the Greek word "anakampto," meaning 'bent back,' which describes the distinctive shape of the flower's spur. The specific epithet "laxiflora" indicates the flowers' open and loosely arranged structure.

Pyramidal orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*) 	The Pyramidal Orchid is a tall, ground-dwelling orchid with pink, purple, or white flowers organized into a conical spike. Each flower features spreading petals and a deeply three-lobed lip. The orchid blooms from April to July and is widespread across most of Greece. It commonly grows in dry grasslands and open scrublands at elevations up to 1600 meters.

Holy orchid (*Anacamptis sancta*) 	The Holy Orchid is distinguished by its pink flowers arranged in a long and narrow spike. Each flower possesses a long-pointed upper part, known as a helmet, and a pink lip. The leaves form a rosette at the base of the plant. This orchid typically blooms from late April to May. It is a rather scarce plant, commonly found in olive groves and open scrubland on the Eastern Aegean Islands.

Bee orchid (*Orphrys sp.*) 	This species of Bee Orchid has evolved unique techniques to attract pollinating insects, particularly hymenoptera like bees. The flower's lip mimics the shape, coloration, and texture of an insect's abdomen to fool male bees. Additionally, the flowers emit pheromones that closely resemble those released by female insects, further attracting the males. During attempted mating, the bees come into contact with the flower's fused stamens and stigma, picking up pollen masses. This pollen is then transferred and can lead to fertilization when the bee visits another flower. Bee Orchids typically bloom in the spring and are found in a variety of habitats, such as open scrublands, clearings in dry woodlands, bushy grasslands, and untended olive groves.
Broomrapes family (Orobanchaceae)	

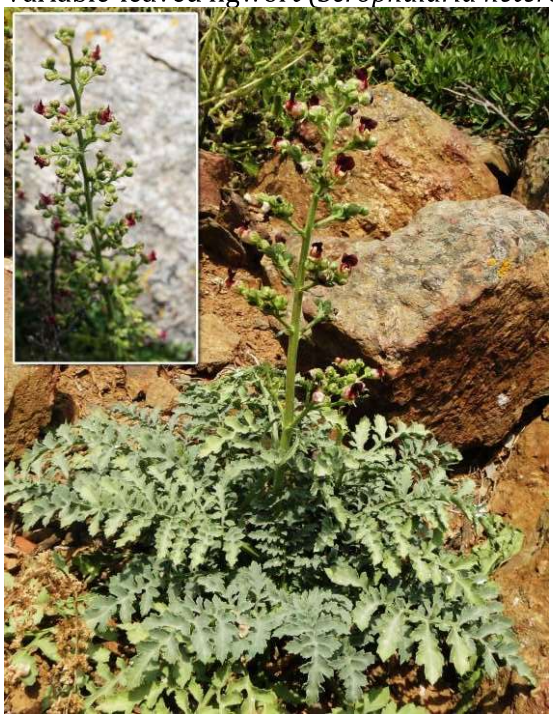
Downy broomrape (*Orbanche pubescens*) 	The Downy Broomrape is an annual herb with a fleshy stem that is light in color and varies in height, typically growing from just a few centimeters up to approximately 50 cm tall. Plants in the genus Orobanche, including the Downy Broomrape, lack chlorophyll and do not perform photosynthesis, resulting in the reduction or absence of leaves. In place of leaves, the plant has scale-like structures. The stem of the Downy Broomrape is coated with fine, short hairs, which give it a soft, fuzzy appearance. Its flowers are small, pinkish, and notably hairy, arranged in a loose and elongated spike. Being a parasitic plant, the Downy Broomrape depends on a host plant for its water and nutrients, establishing a parasitic connection through the extension of its roots. This parasitic relationship can be harmful to the host plant. The Downy Broomrape targets a diverse array of crops, which can lead to decreased yields and economic losses for farmers.
Poppies family (Papaveraceae)	

Yellow-horned poppy (*Glaucium flavum*) 	The yellow-horned poppy is easily recognized by its large, pinnate, wavy basal leaves, which are both fuzzy and have a bluish-green hue, and by its striking bright yellow flowers that resemble paper. It blooms from April to June. This plant is a native biennial or short-lived perennial herb that typically grows on sandy and gravelly beaches. You can also find it on roadsides, within olive groves, and in ruderal areas some distance inland, up to elevations of 500 meters. The yellow-horned poppy is also known for its notable elongated fruits, which can reach lengths of up to 30 cm, resembling "horns." The genus name "Glaucium" is derived from the Greek word for blue-green, describing the color of the leaves, while the specific epithet 'flava' is Latin for yellow, indicating the color of its flowers.
Grasses family (Poaceae)	
Giant reed (*Arundo donax*) 	The giant reed is a perennial aquatic grass and stands as the largest type of grass, as well as being one of the most prevalent reeds in Greece. This tall species can reach heights between 2 to 10 meters. Its flowers blossom in large, plume-like clusters, primarily during the months of September and October. Originally from Asia, the giant reed has become widely established in the warm climates of Greece, where it can be found along rivers and streams, in ditches, and in ravines. Sometimes, it forms expansive reedbeds. Although it contributes to the riparian scenery, the giant reed is considered one of the world's top 100 invasive alien species. It is problematic because it outcompetes native plants and can significantly reduce groundwater levels. Despite its invasive nature, the giant reed has practical applications. Its cellulose is useful in the production of rayon and paper. The plant is also utilized for basketry, construction materials, and even making walking sticks. (Photo Source: Wikipedia, Biest)

Sea onion (*Charybdis maritima*) 	The sea onion is a perennial herbaceous plant with a bulbous underground structure known as a bulb. The buld is typically large, up to 15 cm, with overlapping scales.Leaves are often bluish-green with a waxy texture, which helps it conserve moisture in its coastal habitat. Small, star-shaped flowers clustered along the tall, erect stalk with a white or pale pink color. Blooming from the end of summer to autumn. The sea onion is commonly found in sandy or rocky shores, cliffs, and dunes. The plant contains toxic compounds, particularly in its bulb, harmful to humans and animals.
Buttercup family (Ranunculaceae)	

Nigella degenii 	This is an annual herb that is endemic to the Cyclades and exhibits signs of inbreeding depression. It is noted for having stalked petals and sepals, with the sepals being larger than the petals and coming in colors of blue, white, or pale green. The flowers feature anthers that can be pale blue, red, or dark violet. This herb has leaves that are finely divided. Flowering occurs from May to July, with the plant's unique flowers displaying notably stalked petals and sepals. The herb grows in garigue and phrygana, as well as in abandoned terraces, vineyards, on stony seashores, and along stone fences. It is typically found at elevations from sea level to 400 meters and can occasionally be found up to 900 meters.
Rue family (Rutaceae)	

Common rue (*Ruta graveolens*) 	The Common Rue is a tall, perennial herb that features oblong leaf segments. Upon being crushed, the leaves and stems release essential oils, producing a distinct aroma. The leaves grow in pairs along the length of the stem. This plant has yellow flowers that form tight clusters at the tips of the stems, and the petals have edges that are either serrated, with small pointed teeth, or undulate, which gives them a wavy look. The Common Rue blooms from April to July. This plant is native to the Mediterranean region and typically found in dry, rocky areas and on stone walls, at elevations up to 1700 meters throughout much of Greece. Historically, during the Middle Ages, rue was believed to help ward off the plague and was used as protection against witches. It has also been used extensively in traditional medicine.
Figwort family (Scrophulariaceae)	
Ivy-leaved toadflax (*Cymbalaria muralis*) 	The Ivy-Leaved Toadflax is a creeping perennial herb that grows horizontally across the ground or over rocks and other structures. Its stems can take root at the nodes when they touch the soil, enabling the plant to quickly spread and establish large patches. The leaves are rounded and heart-shaped, with 5-7 broad lobes, and they bear a resemblance to those of ivy plants. The plant's flowers are small, delicate, trumpet-shaped, and display two lips and a short spur. They come in shades of purple, pink, or white and bloom from February to June. The Ivy-Leaved Toadflax has become naturalized on stone walls throughout Mediterranean Greece. It is favored as an ornamental plant due to its trailings habits that efficiently cover less attractive areas. It is also used in rock gardens and as landscaping ground cover.

Variable-leaved figwort (*Scrophularia heterophylla*) 	The variable-leaved figwort, also known by its genus name Scrophularia, is a perennial herbaceous plant featuring deeply toothed, lobed, and somewhat fleshy leaves. These plants are often distinguished by their strong fragrance and have small, almost spherical, pouch-like flowers that are partly enclosed by tiny sepals. Scrophularia heterophylla, in particular, bears dark red flowers with white lips that form a sparse, pyramidal, leafless cluster. It blooms from March to early August. This species of figwort can be seen growing on old walls and rocky slopes up to an altitude of 2500 meters, though it is most commonly found below 500 meters. It is widespread in Mediterranean Greece, on Lefkada, and the Aegean Islands, including Crete, but is not typically found in the northern interior regions. Variable-leaved figwort is also appreciated as an ornamental plant, adding a unique touch to garden landscapes.

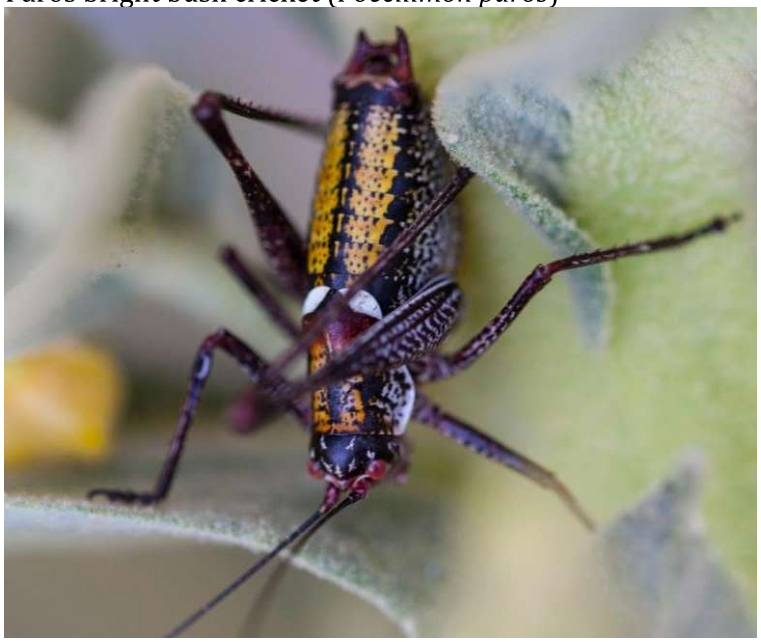
Greek mullein (*Verbascum graecum*) 	The Greek Mullein is a tall and robust biennial plant prominently covered with dense, white, woolly hairs at the lower part. It forms a rosette of basal leaves and a tall, upright stem that bears yellow flowers. The inflorescence is somewhat loosely branched with small, slim bracts. The flowers are comprised of five petals and are saucer-shaped, with a corolla measuring between 15 to 30 mm across. The stamens are noticeable for their white hairs. The flowering season extends from May to early August. The Greek Mullein can be found in dry, stony grasslands, on stony banks, and in open scrubby areas at elevations up to 1900 meters, although it is typically seen below 1300 meters in central and northwest Greece. This plant is appreciated for its ornamental value in gardens and is also used medicinally for treating respiratory ailments.
Nightshade family (Solanaceae)	

White henbane (*Hyoscyamus albus*) 	Golden Henbane is a herbaceous perennial plant with multiple branches sprouting from its base. Both its stems and leaves are covered in fine hairs, giving the plant a soft, fuzzy look. The leaves are ovate to lanceolate in shape with irregular margins and are borne on long stalks. The flowers are a deep yellow color, with the throat being violet-black. They are trumpet-shaped with five lobes and grow in clusters at the ends of the branches. The plant flowers from March to June. Golden Henbane often establishes itself in disturbed areas like roadsides, fields, and wastelands, and it tends to prefer dry or sandy soils. It is native to Egypt and the Levant and has become naturalized on walls on Naxos Island. As a member of the nightshade family, Hyoscyamus aureus contains tropane alkaloids, such as hyoscyamine and scopolamine, which can be toxic if consumed in large amounts. Despite this, the plant's properties have been harnessed since ancient times for use as a sedative and reputedly as a love potion. The Ancient Egyptians also smoked henbane to address dental ailments.
Nettle family (Urticaceae)	

Spreading pellitory (*Parietaria judaica*) 	The Spreading Pellitory is a perennial herb that features small, yellowish flowers. These flowers are grouped in clusters that can range from three to many and are found in the leaf axils. They are attached to the plant's pink or red hairy stems. The plant's leaves are also hairy, but their edges are smooth. The Spreading Pellitory typically blooms from March to June, and then again from September to October. This plant grows well on stone walls, as well as in orchards and gardens where the soil is rich. It is also commonly found in nutrient-rich habitats such as ravines, at the bases of cliffs, in cracks along stone walls, beside streams, and in irrigation ditches. It can be found throughout Greece at elevations up to 1000 meters. A noteworthy aspect of the Spreading Pellitory is that its pollen, which is most abundantly produced in the autumn, is highly allergenic.

Fauna

Grasshopper:

Paros bright bush cricket (*Poecilimon paros*) 	The Paros Bright Bush Cricket is endemic to the Cyclades. It features red eyes and long antennae, each marked with a distinctive yellow stripe down the back. The individual shown here is a male; female crickets of this species are typically green. These crickets can be found in a variety of habitats, such as phrygana, terraces, olive groves, and maquis, and they tend to hide when they sense danger. Females are wingless, in contrast to the males, which have short wings they use to create chirping sounds. This species is currently classified as endangered.
Great green bush cricket (*Tettigonia viridissima*) 	The Great Green Bush Cricket is a large, long-winged insect that typically measures between 21 to 28 millimeters in length. It is usually olive green with a brown stripe and has long, slender antennae. Some individuals may also have yellow legs. Its call is loud and can be likened to a continuous rattling noise. This species can thrive in any habitat that has dense and tall vegetation. To locate this cricket easily, one should listen for its distinctive call.

Balkan field grasshopper (*Chorthippus bornhalmi*) 	The Balkan Field Grasshopper is a medium-sized insect, measuring 11 to 24 millimeters in length. Its base color varies from green to brown, and it typically has medium-sized wings. The individual shown in the picture is a male, distinguished by its unique yellow and orange coloring on the backside. It favors semi-wet habitats near or around streams, environments that support the growth of lush vegetation and grasses. These grasshoppers often remain hidden, so following their call is the most effective method for locating them.

Moroccan cross-backed grasshopper (*Dociostaurus maroccanus*) 	The Moroccan cross-backed Grasshopper typically has a body length ranging from 16 to 38 millimeters. It features a yellowish-grey body adorned with dark markings. The pronotum displays a white, cross-shaped pattern, and the insect has large forewings, with the hindwings sometimes being speckled. This grasshopper thrives in a variety of habitats but requires undisturbed soil for breeding purposes. Traditionally, these grasshoppers migrated in swarms from Europe to North Africa. However, there has been a recent increase in their population numbers in Europe, leading to swarms that have posed a significant threat to agriculture. They are active from May to September.

Common dark bush cricket (*Pholidoptera griseoaptera*) 	The Common Dark Bush Cricket has a body length ranging from 11 to 21 millimeters. The individual in the photograph is an immature (nymph) from this species. It features a tan body with dark brown and white stripes along the sides and a yellowish underside. This cricket's natural habitats include woodland edges and clearings, thickets, and similar environments. The diet consists of vegetation, often bramble (Rubus species), or small insects. Females lay their eggs in the crevices of rotting wood or bark. It's worth noting that during the courtship season, females may sometimes be rejected by males.

Common digging grasshopper (*Arcotylus insubricus*) 	The Common Digging Grasshopper ranges in size from 12 to 26 millimeters. This long-winged grasshopper showcases colorful hind wings, which may come in shades of red, yellow, or orange. The hind margin is rounded, and the wings have side flaps marked with white spots. It is commonly found along coastlines and inland areas, especially in places where vegetation is sparse and patches of barren soil are present. This grasshopper is often found near rivers and lakes. The genus name "Arcotylus" is derived from the Greek words meaning 'pointed' and 'crest.'

Blue-winged grasshopper (*Oedipoda caerulescens*) 	The Banded-winged Grasshopper has a body length ranging from 15 to 28 millimeters. The photograph shows a nymph of the species. The coloration of these grasshoppers is variable, allowing them to blend in with their specific surroundings. The forewings feature two to three distinctive dark bands, while the hindwings are pale blue and display a dark crossband. When flying, the colourful hindwings can be seen. This species inhabits open, stony areas with sparse vegetation, including mountainous regions. The Blue-winged Grasshopper is typically active from July to October.

Egyptian locust/grasshopper (*Anacridium aegyptium*) 	The Egyptian Locust, also known as the Egyptian Grasshopper, has a body length ranging from 32 to 66 millimeters. As one of the largest grasshoppers in Europe, it can be found in various shades, including grey, brown, yellow, and olive. It is most easily recognized by the distinctive vertical black lines that run down its eyes. This grasshopper's preferred habitats are scrublands, gardens, and agricultural areas, such as orchards and olive groves. There, they feed on a variety of leaves and often rest in bushes and trees. While Egyptian Grasshoppers can be seen throughout the year, they are most commonly observed from May to September.

Insect:

Ground mantis (*Rivetina balcanica*) 	The Ground Mantis measures about 80 millimeters in length. This species has evolved to have reduced wings and primarily moves on the ground, which is unusual for mantises since adults typically have the ability to fly. They often exhibit a grey-brown coloration that allows them to blend in seamlessly with their vegetation surroundings. Ground Mantises have long front legs, which they use to capture insects, and then consume them with their powerful jaws. It is noted that females may consume smaller males during mating seasons. They inhabit areas with vegetation and are often active on summer nights. The Ground Mantis can be found in a variety of habitats, typically those with sparse vegetation.
Mediterranean checkered scorpion (*Mesobuthus gibbosus*) 	The Mediterranean Checkered Scorpion measures up to 80 millimeters in body length. It is yellowish-brown in color and possesses the classic features of scorpions, including two front pincers and a long, curved tail with a stinger at the tip. Juvenile scorpions are lighter in color and are often carried on their mother's back. These pincers are used to capture invertebrates, which are then subdued with venom from the scorpion's stinger. This scorpion prefers areas with sparse vegetation and dry conditions, such as under stones. They are nocturnal creatures and are typically only active at night, unless disturbed in their hiding places. Hikers camping at night should be aware of their presence. The sting of the Mediterranean Checkered Scorpion is painful and can cause swelling and a burning sensation. Although the sting is not life-threatening, it is advisable to seek medical attention if stung, as it may lead to other health issues.

Mediterranean banded centipede (*Scolopendra cingulata*) 	The Mediterranean Banded Centipede is a relatively small centipede, with a body length of 120-160 millimeters. Its color varies based on the age of the individual, with younger centipedes often displaying a bright orange head and rear. The creature is long and flat, with each body segment supporting one pair of legs, except for the first two segments, which instead have modified legs forming venomous jaws. Be advised that these jaws can deliver a painful bite. The centipede uses these venomous jaws to capture and consume invertebrates. As a nocturnal species, it typically hides during daylight hours, but hikers should nonetheless be cautious. The Mediterranean Banded Centipede is commonly found in soil, under stones, and in decaying tree trunks. Although the venom is not fatal to humans, it can cause painful symptoms and should be treated with proper care.
Eresus walckenaeri 	Eresus walckenaeri is a species of ladybird spider. Females can grow up to 40mm, while males are smaller, at around 10mm. The female spider is black with a distinctive ring of orange around its back, whereas the male is orange with four black circles on its back. They construct complex webs under rocks, which may appear pink in color. These webs include multiple traps for ensnaring other insects. Female spiders create large egg sacs containing hundreds of eggs. When the eggs hatch, the spiderlings are fed a regurgitated liquid by the mother. After hatching, the females often sacrifice themselves by allowing their offspring to consume them for energy before the young leave the nest. Males are commonly observed along trails as they search for females, although they can sometimes be difficult to distinguish from red jumping spiders.

Violet carpenter bee (*Xylocopa violacea*) 	The Violet Carpenter Bee is one of the largest bee species, measuring 28 mm, which makes it quite noticeable. It is entirely black in head, body, and antennae. Males can be distinguished by a light brown ring at the top of their antennae. This species is known for making its nests by burrowing into dead wood and creating breeding cells, which it eventually fills with pollen. The Violet Carpenter Bee will only attack if provoked. It typically emerges in April or May and hibernates during the winter. These bees can be seen buzzing around in search of mates and suitable nesting sites, and they may occasionally be spotted dipping into the calyx of a flower to extract nectar. (Photo Source: Wikimedia, Krejcik)
Purplescent longhorn (*Purpuricenus desfontainii*) 	The Purplescent Longhorn is a longhorn beetle that measures approximately 12-23 mm in length. It has a black head with two long antennae, a red midsection bearing two black spots, and a unique three-pronged fork shape. The rear part of its body is red, with a black half-circle marking at the tip of the wings. Two black legs protrude from each body segment. Adults are often seen feeding on flowers along trails, while the larvae tend to be more hidden within deciduous trees and shrubs.

Grand antlion (*Palpares libelluloides*) 	The Grand Antlion is a relatively large insect with a wingspan that can reach up to 10 cm. Its wings are usually translucent and adorned with brown spots. The individual depicted is a young antlion that has not yet fully developed. These antlions are active both during the day and at night, typically from May to September. They are often observed flying close to the ground. The species name 'libelluloides' translates to "dragonfly-like," referring to the similarity in appearance when their wings are spread. While walking on sandy trails, you might come across small holes; these are the traps constructed by antlion larvae. (Photo Source: Wikimedia, Cebeci)
Robber fly (*Asilidae sp.*) 	Robber flies are a type of insect belonging to the family Asilidae. They have long legs equipped with spines at the ends. Additionally, these flies possess two large eyes, and their size typically ranges from 0.5 to 2.5 cm. They also have a prominent 'nose' structure known as a proboscis, which they use to sting and paralyze their prey. Robber flies are harmless to humans and typically feed on arthropods. Along paths, you might spot them perched on objects that provide them with an advantageous position for hunting insects. They lie in wait to ambush and capture their prey in mid-flight, a behavior that has earned them the nickname 'robber flies.'

Firefly male (*Lampyridae sp.*)  	The Lampyridae family consists of light-emitting beetles, commonly known as fireflies or glowworms. These insects are easy to identify at night by the glowing spots they produce to attract mates. Initially, the light served as a warning to predators of their unpleasant taste, but it has since evolved into a mating signal. The light emanates from the underside of the beetle's abdomen. Common habitats for these beetles include wetlands, wooded areas, and regions with limestone formations, where their larvae can find a primary food source: snails. While female fireflies are flightless and wormlike in appearance, males have the ability to fly, enabling them to search for the flickering lights of females.

Pedestredorcadion insulare 	The Pedestredorcadion insulare is a small beetle that is endemic to the Cyclades. It features two long black antennae and a black body with vertical white stripes. This species is ground-dwelling, as it has lost the ability to fly over time. It can be found in grassy areas during the spring, where adults feed on grasses and larvae feed on the roots.
Bombyliidae 	The Bombyliidae family, commonly known as bee flies, are flies that are typically larger than other flies by about 2 mm. The adults primarily feed on the nectar and pollen of flowers, using a long, tube-like structure called a proboscis, which they extend from their mouths into the flower. Their resemblance to bees provides them with a measure of protection from certain predators. Despite their benign appearance, bee flies are actually enemies of bees and other insects. During their larval stage, female bee flies cunningly lay their eggs in the nests of unsuspecting bees, beetles, or wasps. When the larvae hatch, they consume the host's larvae and then usurp their food reserves. (Photo Source: Wikimedia, Vassen)

Pine chafer (*Polyphylla fullo*) 	The Pine Chafer is a sizable beetle, measuring about 38 mm in length. Its body color can range from red-brown to black and is distinguished by a marbled pattern of white or pale yellow on its back. Females are generally larger than males but lack the males' prominent scent-detecting flaps on their antennae. The beetle pictured here is a male. The genus name Polyphylla translates to "many leaves." Although nocturnal by nature, the Pine Chafer can sometimes be seen during the day on tree trunks or low-lying branches. Adults feed on pine tree leaves, while the larvae consume the roots of grasses. This beetle is found in a variety of habitats, from vineyards to wooded areas, including pine forests.

Hornet mimic hoverfly (*Volucella zonaria*) 	The Hornet Mimic Hoverfly is a species that reaches a body length of 25 mm. It has a yellow body with black bands and a yellow face, along with translucent brown wings. This hoverfly also features wide, large, oval-shaped reddish eyes and does not have a stinger, making it easy to identify. It resembles a hornet, which is an example of mimicry used to deter predators, but it is completely harmless to humans. The Hornet Mimic Hoverfly can be found in summer habitats such as woodlands and gardens. It primarily feeds on nectar, so to spot them, look for these hoverflies on flowers during the summer months.

cicada (*Cicada orni*) 	The Cicada is a large species more often heard than seen. The term "cicada" in Latin means "buzzer," aptly describing the sound they make. They measure 25mm in length and have a cryptic coloring of brown and grey that helps them blend into tree bark. During summer, males produce a loud buzzing noise to attract females to their trees. They also possess long, transparent, membranous wings. Cicadas are commonly found hanging on tree trunks, where they feed on sap. However, they are known to fall silent when approached, so when walking through shrublands, keep an eye on the trunks of trees for any sudden movements that might reveal their presence.

Carabus garecus 	The Carabus graecus is a common beetle that is easy to spot. It is a large, elongated black beetle with two large straight antennae at the front and a sizeable rounded rear. This beetle is often found in Eurasian forest areas. It is also noteworthy that it is wingless, so keep an eye on the ground to spot one.
Four-spotted blisterbeetle (*Mylabris quadripunctata*) 	The Four-spotted Blister Beetle measures between 9 to 21 mm in length. It features a black head, legs, and antennae. The wings usually have four distinctive spots. The underside of some of these beetles may also look furry. Their bright coloring acts as a deterrent to predators. When threatened, this beetle secretes a chemical that can burn the skin and cause blisters. The female beetle lays thousands of eggs, although many do not survive. The surviving larvae are insectivorous, feeding on bees, grasshoppers, and their hosts' provisions.

Hairy scoliid wasp (*Scolia hirta*) 	The Hairy Scoliid Wasp is found in many Mediterranean countries. These wasps vary in size from 10 to 25 mm and have an entirely black body with two dark yellow stripes on their abdomen. Their wings appear dark but exhibit a light blue color when reflecting sunlight. From July to September, they can be observed feeding on flowers, particularly those with composite or multiple components. Additionally, they are known for their parasitic behavior where they lay their eggs in beetle larvae, which are then used as food for their offspring. (Photo Source: Wikimedia, Friedrich)

*O*riental hornet (*Vespa orientalis*) 	The Oriental Hornet ranges in body length from 25 to 35 millimeters. It is reddish-brown with a broad yellow band on the abdomen and a yellow patch between the eyes, along with two pairs of wings. These hornets have powerful jaws and may bite if they feel provoked. They are known predators of the Honey Bee (Apis mellifera). Their habitats include various types of nests, which can be found underground or in aerial, enclosed spaces such as roofs or walls, where the nest consists of multiple combs inhabited by the colony. The behavior of the Oriental Hornet is similar to that of other social wasps, with colonies living collectively, comprising a single queen and thousands of worker wasps. Their active season extends from April to November.

Rhynocoris erythropus 	The Rhynocoris erythropus is an assassin bug that measures 12 to 15 mm in length. Its body features a coloration of yellow, red, and black, with the side margins of the abdomen displaying alternating yellow/orange and black stripes. The legs are also banded with red and black stripes. This species can be found in open areas and is active from May to September.

Black percher (*Diplacodes lefebvrii*) 	The Black Percher is a dragonfly with a body length ranging from 25 to 34 mm. It is small and predominantly black. Females have yellow markings and additional spots on their hindwings. This species inhabits open wastelands and freshwater environments such as lakes and marshes. They are known to perch on vegetation from April to November.

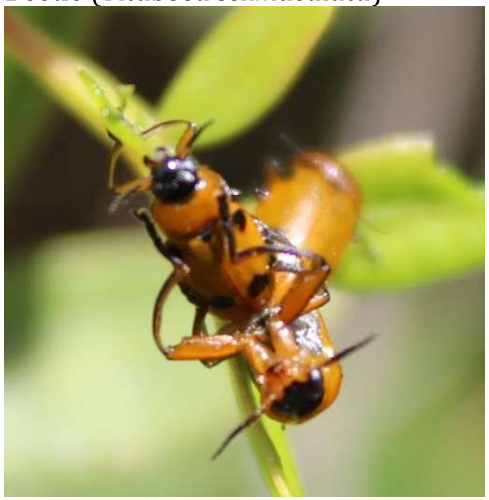
Common golden ring (*Cordulegaster boltonii*) 	The Common Goldenring is a large dragonfly, measuring 74 to 84 mm in length. It is easily identifiable by its green eyes and the black and yellow stripes across its body. The female features a long, pointed ovipositor at the end of her abdomen for laying eggs. They are commonly found around streams and small rivers in open areas and woodlands. Here, males patrol specific stretches of water, and rival flights often occur. When laying eggs, the female hovers vertically and uses her ovipositor to insert eggs into the stream bank. She remains for a few minutes before moving to a new location. As larvae, the dragonflies live underwater for 2 to 5 years. Their active season spans from late May to August. The genus name, Cordulegaster, is derived from the Greek word 'kordylinus,' meaning 'club-shaped,' likely referring to the shape of the abdomen or the ovipositor.

Black-backed grass skimmer (*Paragus haemorrhous*) 	The Black-backed Grass Skimmer is a common hoverfly with a size ranging from 4.3 to 5.9 mm. It has a rear abdomen that is red-orange to dark red in color. This hoverfly is often found on flowers, where it feeds on nectar and pollen for energy and protein. Its larvae are predators that feed on aphids. The Black-backed Grass Skimmer can typically be found across Europe in open areas or grasslands and is active from May to September. These hoverflies are notable for their ability to hover almost motionless in mid-air.

Swollen thighed beetle (*Oedemera nobilis*) 	The Swollen-thighed Beetle has a body length ranging from 8 to 11 mm. This beetle is distinguishable by its bright metallic blue and green coloration and distinctly thickened hind thighs (femora). It also has hardened forewings (elytra), which narrow towards the tips and barely cover the membranous hindwings beneath. The beetle's habitat includes grasslands, where it is commonly found on flowers feeding on pollen and nectar. Its larvae reside in hollowed-out plant stems and are active from April to August. The name of the beetle's order, Coleoptera, is derived from the Greek words for 'sheath' and 'wing.'

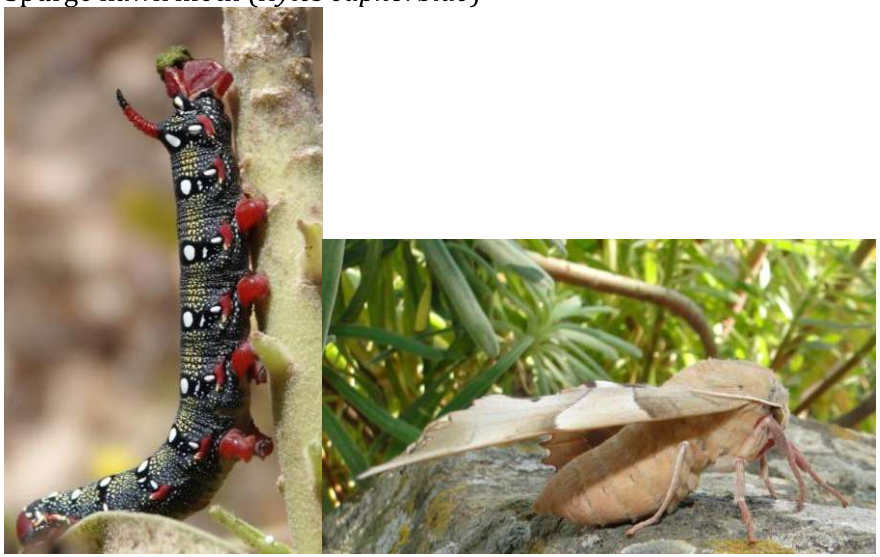
European honeybee (*Apis mellifera*)  	The European honeybee has a 12 to 16 mm body length. This bee species displays the traditional yellow and black colors but stands out with distinctive orange bands on its abdomen. The honeybee features black legs, translucent wings, large eyes, and a hairy head and thorax. Although the honeybee can be found in many habitats from March to November, its population has recently been in decline due to a disease caused by varroa, an external parasitic mite. Beekeepers have reported unusually high mortality rates in their colonies in the past few years. Predatory species like the Asian hornet (Vespa velutina) are also known to attack and kill honeybee workers. Importantly, these bees are responsible for producing a unique type of honey. When hiking on the trail, keep an eye out for small white boxes, which are beehives used by farmers. Beekeeping is an integral part of Naxian culture as it leads to the production of honey. During the summer, farmers often feed their bees thyme and heather, resulting in the creation of a distinct Greek Naxian thyme honey. Sampling local farmers' honey offers a chance to taste a high-quality product that is chemical-free and infused with unique local floral flavors.

European paper wasp (*Polistes dominula*) 	The European Paper Wasp typically measures 9 to 13 mm in body length. It is predominantly yellow and black, with a patch of yellow just below its eyes and black mandibles. Additionally, the underside of the final segment of the abdomen is either partially or completely yellow. While Polistes species may look similar at first glance, each one has distinctive color patterns, including variations in stripes and antennae, among other features. This wasp inhabits areas such as grasslands and woodlands that are rich in flowers and can be found at various altitudes. They are active during the season from April to October. The photograph included illustrates the wasp's nest, which is tucked away in a pistachio bush.

Beetle (*Tituboea sexmaculata*) 	The Tituboea sexmaculata is a beetle whose body length ranges from 8 to 13 mm. It has a reddish-orange body with a black head and six black spots distributed across its back. This beetle can be found in various habitats and is typically active during the months of May and June.

Owly sulfur (*Libelloides coccajus*) 	The Owly Sulfur, also known as the Neuropteran has a forewing length of 20 to 27 mm. This insect is distinctively marked with white or yellow patches. The hindwings feature a more extensive black basal area, whereas the forewings are mostly lined with black veins. This rare insect has a black body with an unusual amount of hair. It is also characterized by large bulging eyes and long antennae that are clubbed at the end. You can find it in open woodlands and grasslands from April to July.

European dwarf mantis (*Ameles spallanzania*) 	The European Dwarf Mantis has a body length ranging from 18 to 40 mm. Both males and females can have green, brown, or grey bodies, with slightly pointed eyes and threadlike antennae. Males feature slender bodies with elongated wings, whereas females are more robust, with curled abdomens and short wings that render them flightless, as seen in the picture. This species occupies habitats with sparse, low vegetation and is active from May to September.

Humming bird hawk-moth (*Macroglassum stellatarum*) 	The Hummingbird Hawk-Moth has a wingspan of 40-45 mm. It features a distinctive gray color with various dark markings, and its hindwings are a bright orange. This moth is often found both day and night in habitats such as gardens or parks. It feeds on the nectar of Buddleja and other plant species by hovering and darting at remarkable speeds. Similar to its namesake, the hummingbird, this moth feeds on flower nectar with its long proboscis while remaining suspended in the air. However, the larvae feed on bedstraws, such as Galium and Rubia species.
Spurge hawk moth (*Hyles euphorbiae*) 	The Spurge Hawk Moth is a European moth, and here it is shown in its larval form. As an adult moth, it has a wingspan of 70 to 85 mm with a broad band on the forewings that extends to the tips. The forewings are grey, adorned with almost square-shaped olive-brown blotches, while the hindwings feature pink with black blotches at the base. The larval coloration varies, but they primarily feed on spurge (Euphorbia species). The depicted larva is smooth and black with multiple white dots; each horizontal row includes a vertical column of three white dots. The larva culminates in feet that are red, matching the head, which is the same red color and features a horn-like structure with a black tip at the base. It inhabits grasslands and woodland edges, including mountainous areas, and is typically active from July to August.

Semipunctated shield bug (*Graphosoma semipunctatum*) 	The Semipunctated Shield Bug measures 10 to 13 mm in length. Its body color ranges from shades of orange to red, serving as a warning to predators of its unpalatable nature. On its back, it has distinct black stripes and features black spots or blotches on the pronotum, with legs that are primarily orange. This bug can be found in open areas where it feeds on plants from the Apiaceae family, commonly known as umbellifers. To spot this bug, look at umbellifer flowers such as wild carrots (Daucus carota). The Semipunctated Shield Bug is active from April to September.

Seven-spotted ladybird (*Coccinella septempunctata*) 	The Seven-Spotted Ladybird, commonly known as a ladybug, is a carnivorous beetle that ranges in size from 5 to 8 mm in length. They are generally red with seven black spots of varying sizes. However, other color forms exist, with the number of spots ranging from 0 to 9. The ladybird's distinctive spots and bright colors serve as a warning to predators of its toxicity. They can be found in a variety of habitats, including gardens, meadows, and forests. (Photo Source: Wikimedia, Hodnett)

Eupeodes corollae 	Eupeodes corollae is a common European hoverfly that measures 5 to 8 mm in length. The majority of its body, which includes an oval-shaped abdomen, is yellow. The lateral segments of the abdomen feature black stripes. This hoverfly also has large black eyes and translucent wings. It inhabits open areas and frequently breeds in ponds and ditches. In far southern regions, this hoverfly can be found throughout the year. (Photo Source: Wikimedia, Langeveld)

Eristalis pertinax 	Eristalis pertinax is another species of hoverfly. It has a wing length ranging from 8 to 13 mm and is similar to E. tenax. However, it can be distinguished by its orange fore tarsi and the pale basal half of its hind tibiae. This hoverfly typically inhabits wetlands and woodlands, among other environments. They are most commonly found near streams, with their peak activity period extending from February to November.

Butterfly:

Cleopatra (*Gonepteryx cleopatra*) 	The Cleopatra butterfly has a wingspan of 47 to 68 mm. Its wings are primarily yellow or pale yellow, with brown dots at the center of each wing. The males feature prominent orange patches that cover most of the upper wing surface. The shape of the wings is distinctive, resembling a near-right angle at the top. Characteristics of the population may vary slightly by location. The larvae feed on buckthorn (Rhamnus species). This butterfly's preferred habitats are open woodlands and scrublands. It is active from May and enters hibernation in August, taking refuge in evergreen trees and shrubs during this period.
Aegean meadow brown (*Maniola telmessia*) 	The Aegean Meadow Brown has a wingspan ranging from 33 to 42 mm. Its coloring is predominantly dark brown, accompanied by an orange band and a variable number of eye-like spots. Females typically feature more extensive orange markings on the upper wings, with the underwings being grey-brown and tinged with yellow. This butterfly's natural habitat is grasslands, where the larvae feed on a variety of grasses, including species of Agrostis and Alopecurus. Additionally, the Aegean Meadow Brown can be found in diverse environments, such as seaside areas, olive groves, rocky slopes, and villages. This species is active from April to September, migrating from West Asia. (Photo Source: Wikimedia, Cebeci)

Clouded yellow (*Colias croceus*) 	The Clouded Yellow is a butterfly with a wingspan of 39 to 56 mm. The wings are generally yellow, reminiscent of the crocus flower. The upper side of the wings is golden yellow or orange with a broad black margin, while the underside is a lighter yellow without borders and tinged with green. On the underside, there is also a white central spot with a smaller white or dark dot above it. This quick-flying butterfly frequents grassland habitats from March to November. Its larvae feed on various legumes, including clover (Trifolium species). It can also be found in rocky areas, by the seaside, in clearings, shrublands, and cultivated areas, essentially anywhere except densely forested regions.

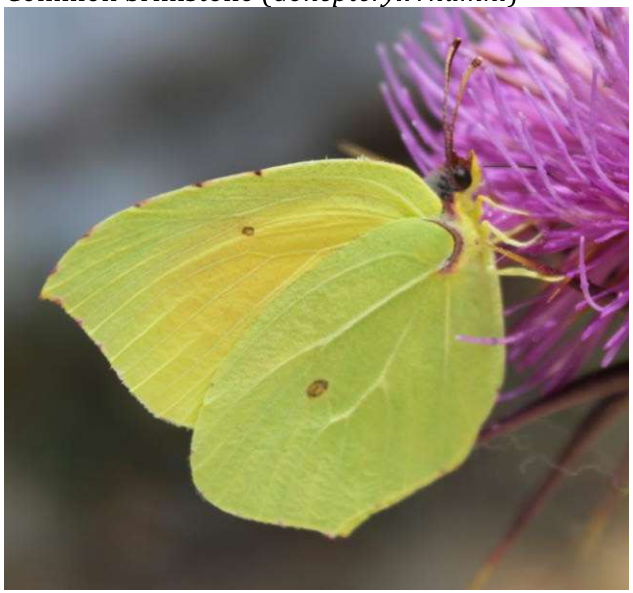
Wood white (*Lepitdea sinapis*) 	The Wood White is a delicate, small white butterfly with a wingspan ranging from 32 to 43 mm. Its wings are predominantly white with rounded tips, which are marked with black or grey. The antennae are distinctive, featuring black tips with a white underside. This species is known for its slow and fluttering flight. Adults often take in mineral salts from puddles and nectar from flowers, while the larvae feed on a variety of plants, including Lathyrus, Lotus, Trifolium, and Vicia. The Wood White typically inhabits forest and woodland edges, as well as rocky areas, and is active from May through August.

Holly blue (*Celastrina argiolus*) 	The Holly Blue is a small butterfly with a wingspan of 21 to 32 mm. Males boast shiny blue upper sides with narrow black margins, while females have much broader black edges on their wings. Both genders have an underside that is silvery blue with black spots only. They typically fly quickly and close to the ground; it is uncommon to see their wings fully open when they are at rest. The Holly Blue can be found in a variety of habitats, including woodlands, grasslands, gardens, and parks. Although they are known to lay eggs on Rubus plants, the larvae mainly feed on a range of plant species from March to September. (Photo Source: Wikimedia, Sharp)

Grayling (*Hipparchia semele*) 	The Grayling is a small butterfly with a wingspan ranging from 40 to 59 mm. This species is easily identifiable by its bright orange forewings, each featuring a single black eyespot with a white dot in the center, situated in the upper left corner of the wing. The hindwings display a blend of brown, white, and black in wave-shaped patterns, which together create an almost mottled grey appearance. The Grayling inhabits grasslands, as well as woodlands, and is best observed from late June to August.

Lattice brown (*Kirinia roxelana*) 	The Lattice Brown is a butterfly that has a wingspan of 58 to 62 mm. The forewings are a bright orange color. On the hindwings, there is a large black eyespot with a white dot at the center, surrounded by a yellow circle. The remainder of the hindwing is brown and features wavy brown lines. This species can be found in habitats such as open woodlands and grasslands, where the larvae feed on a variety of grass species. Adults often rest on tree trunks or within bushes. The Lattice Brown is most commonly seen between May and September.

Bath white (*Pontia daplidice*) 	The Bath White is a butterfly with a wingspan of 45 to 50 mm. The wings are primarily white, with the underside exhibiting green spots and yellow lines. In contrast, the upperside of the wing has black spots. This species typically resides in fields near cultivated areas, clearings such as vineyards or mountain slopes that have sparse vegetation.

Common brimstone (*Gonepteryx rhamni*) 	The Common Brimstone is a butterfly with a wingspan ranging from 47 to 74 mm. The males are characterized by their striking sulfur-yellow color, whereas the females are more greenish-white. Both sexes feature the species' distinctive hooked wingtips and have red antennae. These unique colors help protect them from predators. The Common Brimstone's preferred habitats include woodlands, gardens, and scrublands, where the larvae feed on Buckthorn (Rhamnus species). The active season for this butterfly is from May to September, after which it enters hibernation and then reemerges in early February.

Blue spot hairstreak (*Satyrium spini*) 	The Blue Spot hairstreak has a wingspan of 28 to 34 mm. The upper side of its wings is primarily dark brown, while the underside is a lighter brown marked with white streaks, orange spots, and a distinctive blue spot near the tail. The antennae are black and white striped and clubbed at the ends. This butterfly lives in woodlands and bushy grasslands, and it can also be found in shrublands, along forest roads, in wet areas, and on dry plateaus. The larvae feed on various species of *Rhamnus* plants. The Blue Spot Hairstreak is active from May to July.

Lulworth skipper (*Thymelicus acteon*) 	The Lulworth Skipper is a small butterfly with a wingspan ranging from 21 to 27 mm. This species is darker in color, with a covering of golden scales and a hint of blue in the area between its wings. Females, as shown in the picture, also feature distinctive golden marks that resemble sun rays on each forewing. The skipper inhabits grasslands, where its larvae feed on various types of grass from May to September. Although the Lulworth Skipper's numbers are declining in Northern Europe, leading to its classification as vulnerable in that region, populations in other parts of Europe are considered stable.

Common copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*) 	The Common Copper actually has a much smaller wingspan, typically 18 to 35 mm—not 70 to 85 mm as previously stated. Both male and female Common Coppers have upper wings that are bright orange with dark brown borders and 8 to 9 black spots. The hindwings are dark with an orange border as well. Some females may exhibit a unique underside pattern with yellow or blue spots. This butterfly's preferred habitat is grasslands, where the larvae feed on various species of dock (Rumex sp.). They are active from April to November. The name of the species, phlaeas, is derived from the Greek word 'phlego,' meaning 'to burn up,' likely referring to the butterfly's fiery orange color.

Plain tiger (*Danaus chrysippus*) 	The Plain Tiger is a butterfly with a wingspan ranging from 70 to 80 mm. Both sexes share the same appearance. The body is black with white spots. The underside of the hindwing is light yellow, featuring three spots in the center. The forewing's underside is orange, with a yellow spot in the upper right corner. The wings are bordered in black with white semicircles. Males can be differentiated from females by the presence of a large white spot encircled in black on the underside of the hindwing. The butterfly's distinctive patterns and bright colors serve as a warning to predators that it is poisonous. The Plain Tiger inhabits arid, open areas and can adapt to various habitats, from forests to mountains or gardens to urban environments. These butterflies migrate to Greece in August and September. You might be fortunate to observe them flying just above the ocean during migration. (Photo Source: Wikimedia, Sharp)
Common zebra blue (*Leptotes pirithous*) 	The Common Zebra Blue is a small butterfly with a wingspan of 20 to 25 mm. The upper sides of the wings vary between males and females; males display a purple and blue color, while females are blue and brown. Both sexes feature a distinctive underside pattern of brown with curving white lines, reflecting their common name. Moreover, the hindwings are marked with two black spots and have two small tails. This butterfly is most commonly observed from August to November, though it may also be seen from May to June. Its preferred habitats are cultivated lands and gardens. The Common Zebra Blue often flies fast and close to the ground, or it can be found perched on a flower. (Photo Source: Wikimedia, Sharp)

Eastern baton blue (*Pseudophilotes vicrama*)  	The Eastern Baton Blue is a small butterfly with a wingspan of 20 to 25 mm. The upper side of the wings differs between the sexes. Males boast a light blue color with black borders, while females have brown wings. The undersides of both sexes' wings are a light grey base color with black dots, and the underside of the hindwings also features orange marks. This butterfly is commonly found in various habitats and is typically active during the season from March to September. They are often seen flying quickly close to the ground, but once they land, you might notice them leisurely opening and closing their wings.(Photo Source: Wikimedia, upperside Xulescu)

Pea blue (*Lampides boeticus*) 	The Pea Blue is a small butterfly with a wingspan of 30 to 35 mm. There is a difference in the coloring of the upper side of the wings between the sexes. Male wings are predominantly blue with a brown border, while females are mostly brown with some blue speckles. Both sexes have an underside that is primarily pale brown with tan spots, and the underside of the hindwings features two black spots. These spots mimic 'eyes' to deter predators. Nonetheless, birds may still attack, often leaving these 'eyes' shredded. This species' coloring is similar to that of the Common Zebra Blue (Leptotes pirithous), but they can be distinguished by examining the underside of the wings; the Pea Blue has a browner base color and straighter lines of banding. Moreover, the Pea Blue is larger in size than the Common Zebra Blue. This butterfly can be found in a range of habitats from March to December.(Photo Source: Wikimedia, Laitche)
Painted lady (*Vanessa cardui*) 	The Painted Lady is a medium-sized butterfly with a wingspan of 55 to 60 mm. Both sexes have the same appearance. The upperside of the wings features light orange and brown colors, with black and white spots along the edges. The underside is distinctive, with the hindwing displaying a mix of white and beige, accented with five distinctive brown 'eyes' encircled in orange. Meanwhile, the underside of the forewing is orange and black with additional brown and white spots at the upper corner. This butterfly is known to congregate around plants such as thyme and heather. During its migration, it can be seen flying low over the sea, traveling from North Africa to Europe. The Painted Lady is unique in that it mates throughout the year, which is believed to be associated with its migratory habits. The caterpillars are often found on mallows during December and January.

*M*eadow brown (*Maniola jurtina*) 	The Meadow Brown has a wingspan of 36 to 46 mm, and the appearance differs between sexes. Contrary to the statement, male butterflies are typically smaller, not larger, and are less colorful than females. Males have a single large eye-spot on the forewing, while females have more orange on their forewings and additional eye-spots. The underside of the hindwing is dark brown, and it generally features small 'eye' marks outlined with orange bands. The forewing's underside has an orange patch and a significant 'eye' mark. Males are usually more active and cover a larger area when flying, whereas females fly less and tend to stay within certain locations. Both sexes exhibit a similar slow, up-and-down flight pattern. Meadow Browns inhabit grasslands where the larvae feed on grasses, typically from May to September. These butterflies can also be found resting on oregano flowers.

Reptile:

Balkan pond turtle (*Mauremys rivulata*) 	The Balkan Pond Turtle is a medium-sized freshwater turtle that measures between 185 to 240 mm in length. Its shell is an olive green and brown mix, with prominent white stripes on its neck. This turtle inhabits larger perennial water bodies, such as rivers, ponds, and lakes, where it typically feeds on plants and small animals. It is well-adapted to the warm Mediterranean climate. However, the turtle's population has been in gradual decline due to habitat destruction and degradation.

Rough-tailed agama (*Laudakia stellio*) 	The Rough-tailed Agama is a lizard that bears a slight resemblance to a miniature crocodile. It can reach a total length of 30 cm, has a flattened body, and a triangular head. The tail is typically about the same length as its body, though the overall size can vary. It has small, rough scales and plates covering both its body and tail. The lizard also features long legs and ears that appear as holes on the sides of its head. The top side of its body is dark gray, punctuated with yellow or blue spots, while the underside is white. As a diurnal and heat-loving creature, this lizard is often seen climbing trees or basking in rock crevices, such as those found in stone walls. Its offspring, which emerge in mid-July, feed on arthropods and other invertebrates. They will also consume plant materials, such as fruit, and occasionally, small lizards. The Rough-tailed Agama is adaptable to various habitats, from oak forests and olive groves to phrygana and cultivated areas, but all its preferred environments share the common feature of having some vertical structure, ideally rocky, which provides a substrate for quick escapes.

Balkan green lizard (*Lacerta trilineata*) 	The Balkan Green Lizard is the largest lizard species found in Greece, with a body length of 16 cm and a tail that is twice as long. The adults display a bright green color with a thin black stripe running along the back. Their sides and throat are a bright yellow color. Males occasionally have light blue spots on the sides of their necks. Meanwhile, young lizards are often brown with 3 to 5 streaks on their backs and additional markings on their sides. The lizards inhabit a variety of environments including field edges, forested areas, shrublands, and can be found underneath bushes or in burrows. If you listen carefully, you might hear the sound of the lizards as they rustle through the vegetation.
Ocellated skink (*Chalcides ocellatus*) 	The Ocellated Skink is a sizable skink characterized by a thick neck that blends seamlessly into a body of similar width. This reptile has a small, pointed head and four short legs. The length of the skink's body is about 13 cm and it is adorned with smooth scales. Its coloration varies, typically presenting as yellowish-green or brown, and the scales feature a pattern that intermixes white and dark brown. The skink's belly is a pale white and lacks spots. These skinks are commonly found in gardens, scrublands, beaches, and both dry and moist environments. They tend to hide under stones, inside holes, or within small crevices for shelter. (Photo Source: Wikimedia, HTO)

Grass snake (*Natrix natrix*) 	The Grass Snake is a semi-aquatic, non-venomous snake. On average, it measures about 120 cm in length, although some females can reach up to 200 cm. Its scales are a mixture of grey, brown, and olive green. Sometimes, they also have a yellow or orange collar around their neck and a black underbelly. These snakes are typically found near bodies of water but can also be seen in drier areas.(Photo Source: Wikimedia, Eichler)
Leopard snake (*Zamenis situla*) 	The Leopard Snake is a medium-sized, non-venomous snake that typically measures around 1 meter in length, although some individuals can grow up to 1.2 meters. This snake is easily identifiable by its striking color pattern, which includes a base color of grey or yellow with rows of brownish-red blotches. The sides and belly of the snake are marked with a line of black spots. Additionally, a distinctive U-shaped pattern is located on the top of its head. As a proficient climber, the Leopard Snake often frequents habitats with many structures to climb, such as machinery, walls, and sometimes trees. Its preferred environments may include cultivated areas like vineyards and olive groves. In the warmer months, the snake tends to be active in the morning and evening. (Photo Source: Wikimedia, Kleinfelder)

European cat snake (*Telescopus fallax*) 	The European Cat Snake, also known as the "cat snake" due to its broad, flat head, is a medium-sized snake that typically measures between 70-80 cm in length. It has a slender body and small eyes with vertical pupils. Its coloring varies from brown and gray to yellowish-brown, and it is covered in dark splotches across its entire body. Occasionally, it may exhibit a lighter color with paler spots. The belly is typically yellowish-white. This snake can be found in a variety of habitats, including cultivated lands, rocky regions, and areas with dense vegetation. When walking along trails with stonewalls and ruins, pay close attention, as the snake's coloring allows it to blend in with its surroundings. In Greece, it is known as "Agiofido," which translates to "holy snake."(Photo Source: Wikimedia, Huyssteen)

Amphibian:

Balkan frog (*Pelophylax kurtmuelleri*) 	The Balkan Frog typically measures between 70 to 80 mm in body length. Its primarily green or brown coloring is interspersed with dark green or dark brown spots scattered over its back. Sometimes, a light green stripe runs down the center of its back. This frog is highly aquatic and can inhabit various water bodies, including both flowing and still waters, from puddles and ponds to mountain streams. It can also tolerate high levels of water salinity but is commonly found in warmer areas with plenty of herbaceous vegetation.
European green toad (*Pseudepidalea viridis*) 	The European Green Toad is smaller in size compared to other toads, with a base color that is green and grey. It has grey or olive-green spots on its back. Additionally, the toad's pupil is horizontal, which is a distinguishing feature. The Green Toad is adaptable and lives in a wide array of habitats. It can handle dry conditions and is found in both swampy and arid environments. In forested areas, these toads are often found in open spaces and among bushes, typically away from water sources. However, during the breeding season, they gather in aquatic habitats such as ponds, swamps, lakes, streams, and even puddles.

Bird:

Garden warbler (*Sylvia borin*) 	The Garden Warbler is a small, nondescript bird commonly found in Europe, measuring approximately 14 cm in body length. It has uniformly olive-brown upperparts and white underparts, along with long wings and a long tail. The warbler's eyes are black, and it has grey legs and a bill. While it lacks distinctive markings, its song is similar to that of the Blackcap. This bird prefers habitats of open woodland with dense, low vegetation, which provides suitable cover for nesting. Despite its name, the Garden Warbler is seldom found in gardens. In winter, it migrates to sub-Saharan Africa. Its diet consists of a mixture of insects and fruits.

Cory’s shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*) 	The Cory's Shearwater is a large seabird that inhabits the Mediterranean. It can be recognized by its yellow bill, which is visible from a distance. The shearwater sports pale brown upper parts and white underparts. Its wings, which appear crooked, enable slower movement in the air. Be aware that this shearwater often flocks with others of its kind when feeding. Cory's Shearwaters are commonly found in the warm waters of the Atlantic Ocean, and they expand their range northward during the cooler months.
Oriental turtle dove (*Streptopelia orientalis*) 	The Oriental Turtle Dove is one of the larger dove species and has beautiful plumage, typically featuring rufous-scaled scapulars and wing coverts, although this can vary across different subspecies. The underparts of the dove are light gray. A distinctive characteristic of this dove is the black and white striping on the sides of its neck. These doves prefer to breed in lowland areas with rich undergrowth. Some populations migrate southward during the winter. Known for their shyness, the doves often hide, so to see them, you may need to look up into the tree canopy. (Photo Source: Wikimedia, Prajapati)

Little egret (*Egretta garzetta*) 	The Little Egret is an aquatic bird that measures about 60 cm in size. This bird has striking white plumage, a slender black beak, and long black legs, and sometimes it has yellow feet. They migrate to Africa for the winter and, as such, are present in the Mediterranean region only seasonally. The colonies are known to breed in extensive wetlands with ample tree and bush coverage, where they feed on invertebrates, fish, and frogs. Historically, these birds were common in the region, but they were overhunted for the ornamental feathers on their necks, leading to a significant decline in their population.
Audouin gull (*Ichthyaetus audouinii*) 	The Audouin's Gull is a large species of gull native to the Mediterranean. It has long legs and narrow wings. The gull features the classic coloration with a white head and a light grey body. The wings are grey as well, terminating with black tips, and the legs are a uniform dark grey. This gull has black eyes and a dark red bill, which is marked with a black line at the front. Age can be determined by the body color: a gray-brown coloration signifies the gull's first winter, while a predominantly white tail with black bands indicates a gull in its second winter. It breeds on small islands, where it often makes ground nests, and takes advantage of the isolated setting to fly out at night to fish. The genus name derives from the Ancient Greek words "ichthys" meaning "fish" and "aetos" meaning "eagle," while "audouinii" honors the French naturalist who first described the species. Furthermore, this species is currently listed as vulnerable by the IUCN.

Eurasian kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) 	The Eurasian Kestrel is a smaller bird of prey. The male is recognizable by its distinctive grey head, rust-colored back, and broad grey tail, while the female has a brown head with barred markings on the back and a dark brown tail. Both males and females have yellow ceres (the base of the beak), feet, and rings around their eyes. Additionally, both sexes exhibit pointed wingtips and dark spots on their breasts. These falcons are found in open and lightly wooded countryside, farmland, and grasslands. They do not strictly need woodland but need suitable perching and nesting sites, making them adaptable to urban environments such as cities, roadways, atop buildings, or on wires. They are known for their ability to hover in the sky while scanning for prey, so remember to look up when searching for them. Furthermore, the falcon is often seen as a symbol of nature's power and vitality. (Photo Source: Wikimedia, Trepte)
Common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) 	The Common Buzzard is a medium-to-large bird of prey. It is a robust hawk, characterized by broad wings and a short, dark, square-tipped tail. The plumage on its underside varies from a paler white breast to mixed patterns or a uniformly brown breast. As an opportunistic predator, the buzzard often hunts from a perch, scanning the terrain below for potential prey. It typically hunts over open fields and rough grasslands, although it prefers to reside in habitats such as woodlands, farmlands, and forest edges—especially areas with large trees and extensive wooded patches or parks. The Common Buzzard is usually observed alone or in pairs, either soaring in the sky or perched on a vantage point. (Photo Source: Wikimedia, Cebeci)

Non-insect Arthropod (Spider, Millipede, etc.):

Cylinder millipede (*Pachyiulus varius*) 	The Cylinder Millipede is found on various European islands and can sometimes be encountered in groups. They have numerous legs and small dots that run along the length of their bodies. Additionally, they possess elongated bodies that they roll up into a cylinder shape when threatened. These millipedes are nocturnal creatures that stay hidden underground during the drier months and are known to emit an odor. Most importantly, they play a vital role in the ecosystem by decomposing plant material, thereby recycling nutrients back into the environment.

Lobulated spider (*Argyope lobata*) 	The Lobulated Spider is an orb-web spider with a considerable size difference between the sexes; females measure about 25 mm, while males are much smaller at only 6 mm. The underside of the abdomen is silver with black and red spots, a pattern which helps the spider stay camouflaged within its web. The spider's legs are long and marked with horizontal stripes of white and black. Only the females build large zig-zag patterned webs, which they typically place in low bushes close to the ground. In autumn, you may notice a cocoon shaped like a basket, containing brown eggs. While these spiders can be intimidating, their venom is not fatal to humans.

European garden spider (*Araneus diadematus*) 	The European Garden Spider is an orb-weaver species with individuals measuring from 6.5 mm to 20 mm in size. These spiders come in various colors, ranging from yellow to dark grey, and all feature a distinctive white marking on their abdomen that often forms a cross. Females are larger than males and are known to consume the males after mating. This species is recognized for constructing large orb webs, which the females typically weave among foliage. Once prey is ensnared in the web, the spider quickly bites and wraps it in silk. The spider only bites humans if provoked. It thrives in grasslands and needs a certain level of moisture as well as plenty of potential attachment points for its web. The species name "diadematus" is derived from the Greek word "diadema," meaning 'crown,' combined with the suffix "-atus," which implies likeness.

Door snail (*Albinaria caerulea*) 	The Door Snail is an air-breathing land snail that possesses a medium-sized, smooth, white shell, which can reach up to 16 mm in height. Typically, they are found in large groups on limestone substrates within semi-arid habitats. However, their numbers may decrease in the presence of predators like birds. The estimated lifespan of these snails is about seven years.

Chocolate-band snail (*Helix vermiculata*) 	The Chocolate-band Snail measures 28-29 mm in length and is a sizeable air-breathing land snail. The species has shells of various colors, but they typically feature a lighter background with darker bands and spots. The body of the snail itself is whitish-grey. It usually inhabits dry, vegetated areas close to the coast or in agricultural fields. Humans have traditionally used these snails as a food source.