GREECE – The Zagoria Circuit

TREK OVERVIEW
Our trip starts and finishes on the delightful island of Corfu, now served well with budget flights from London and Manchester.
This shorter, self-guided, trek to the Pindos Mountains of northern Greece concentrates on the Zagoria region, staying overnight in three of the region’s most delightful villages of Monodendri, Papingo and Tsepelovo, where old stone-built and stone-roofed houses provide quaint accommodation.
You will trek through the Vikos Canyon from Monodendri to Papingo, a spectacular day’s walking through the well shaded floor of the canyon – one of the deepest in Europe. Above Papingo a long steady climb takes you up to a mountain refuge perched on a ridge below the summit of Astraka at just under 2000m. You have a day to explore from the refuge, visiting the Drakolimini of Gamilla or, for the fit and experienced, making an ascent of either Astraka (2436m) or Gamilla (2497m). A pleasant day then takes you across the high limestone pastures and down to Tsepelovo for two nights, giving you time to visit the Vikakis gorge and the unique 3-arched packhorse bridge near Kipi, before returning to Corfu for your flight home.

Participation Statement
Adventure Peaks recognises that climbing, hill walking and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

Adventure Travel – Accuracy of Itinerary
Although it is our intention to operate this itinerary as printed, it may be necessary to make some changes as a result of flight schedules, climatic conditions, limitations of infrastructure or other operational factors. As a consequence, the order or location of overnight stops and the duration of the day may vary from those outlined. You should be aware that some events are beyond our control and we would ask for your patience.
PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE/FITNESS
If you are used to regular multi day hill walking you will have the right level of fitness to fully enjoy your time on this trek. Non hill walkers must come with a reasonable degree of fitness. Most days involve 4 - 6 hours walking plus plenty of rest stops.

CATERING ARRANGEMENTS
Three course evening meals are provided on trek with a continental (Greek style) breakfast in the morning. Dinner is usually between 8.00 and 9.00pm. We ask that you pay for any drinks the same night. We do not provide lunches as there are plenty of places where you can purchase food and snacks of your choice to carry with you, or on some days you may like to club together with other trekkers and arrange a shared picnic.

ACCOMMODATION
In Corfu you will stay in a good hotel a few minutes walk from the ferry terminal. Twin, double or single rooms are available. In the mountains a mix of pensions and tavernas are used where you should expect more basic facilities. Private rooms cannot be guaranteed. Two nights are in a traditional mountain refuge which provides only dormitory accommodation.

LANGUAGE AND TIME
Language: Greek. English is fairly widely spoken in the towns and villages. In the mountains you may hear the old Vlach dialect being used.
Time: GMT+2. No daylight saving time at present.

HEALTH
You should bring your own supplies of plasters, blister prevention pads (Compeed), Paracetamol etc. and any medication you are taking. There are no compulsory vaccinations for Greece but the following is recommended: Tetanus. Contact your GP around eight weeks before your trip to check whether you need any vaccinations or other preventive measures. Country specific information and advice is published by the National Travel Health Network and Centre, and useful information about healthcare abroad, including a country-by-country guide of reciprocal health care agreements with the UK, is available from NHS Choices. Village water supplies are good and springs are clean but stream water should never be drunk without first sterilizing with chlorine dioxide tablets.

INSURANCE
Insurance which covers mountain rescue, evacuation and medical expenses is essential. We will require a copy of your insurance prior to departure. Your standard travel insurance should be sufficient for this trip as there is no technical climbing and we do not go above 4000m.

GROUP AND LEADERS
This is a self-guided holiday and therefore you need to be confident in navigation. You will be supplied with maps and route notes. Some trails are very well marked others less so! However notes and trail markings should never be relied on and therefore competent map and compass skills are essential.

WEATHER
The weather in the Pindos Mountains should be pleasant during the day with clear skies, with cooler evenings and nights. Even though it can get very hot down on the coast, it can be very different in the mountains. The higher you are the cooler it will be. Walkers should realize however that weather in the high mountains is unpredictable and should be prepared for this. In June we can expect to find extensive snow patches in the high mountains.

WHAT TO CARRY
This is a backpacking trek and is unsupported. There are still some regions where this is the only way to (economically) experience the beauty of the remote mountains Ñ and this is one of them! Therefore you will need to carry all your belongings with you all the time. However with careful packing and using modern lightweight clothing, your backpack should not weigh more than 10kg at the most. If you are unsure about your ability to carry this amount we suggest you join one of our Backpacking Training weekends in the Lake District to test yourself out.
ALTITUDE
This is not a high altitude trip. However if you are new to altitude you may have concerns about the effects. Don’t worry because our itineraries allow sufficient time to acclimatise, and altitude rarely causes anyone any problems on this trip. The best way to avoid such symptoms is to walk at a gentle steady pace and drink plenty of fluid.

USEFUL TIPS
Just in case your main luggage goes missing en route, it is a good idea to wear your boots on the plane. Most other things can be replaced but comfortable, well worn-in boots cannot. Pack important items in strong plastic bags.

EQUIPMENT
A detailed equipment list is provided on booking but normal summer walking equipment is all that is required, together with sleeping bag liner for use in the refuge. For equipment purchases Adventure Peaks offers a 15% discount off the RRP from their shop in Ambleside or online.

BAGGAGE
For your own comfort travel light. Normally airlines restrict baggage to 20kg, but you should be carrying far less. On trek you will need to carry ALL your personal equipment, as explained above.

VISAS AND PERMITS
Visas for entry into Greece are not required by nationals of the UK, Ireland, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and EU countries.

LOCAL COSTS
All accommodation and most meals (not lunches) are included; please see the itinerary page for full details. Additional costs would include any drinks or snacks outside of mealtimes and taxis between the airport and Corfu hotel.

CURRENCY
The currency in Greece is the Euro. You should take some Euros cash with you. ATMs and change bureaux are available in airports and in main towns only. There are no change facilities on trek.

TIPPING
Tipping at meals and in hotels is normal practice. On this trip there are no local staff who will expect to be tipped.

ADVENTURE PEAKS KITBAG
All Adventure Peaks clients who reside in the UK would normally receive a FREE kitbag for any treks outside the UK. However as a kitbag is not required on this trek we will send you an AP branded lightweight fleece which will be useful to you for this trip. This will be posted to you approx. 3 weeks prior to your departure.

FLIGHTS AND JOINING ARRANGEMENTS
Flights are NOT included as part of this holiday. Budget and charter airlines offer a lot of flights to Corfu from many regional UK airports, and sometimes very cheap deals can be found. Our preferred airline is Easyjet who fly daily from Gatwick and Mon, Fri and Sat from Manchester. As we expect clients to arrive at different times, we have not included transport between the airport and the hotel. A taxi will cost about £5, more at night. Please agree the price with the driver before getting in!

The rendezvous for this trip is the HOTEL IN CORFU at 2000 on Day 1.

You must be at the group hotel in Corfu (details given with final instructions) by 8.00pm on Day 1 for the briefing with our local representative at 8.30pm. Return flights can be booked for anytime on Day 10, or later if you wish to extend your stay on Corfu for some beachtime or to walk the Corfu Trail.

PLEASE ENSURE YOU DO NOT PURCHASE YOUR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL (FLIGHTS OR OTHER) UNTIL WE HAVE GUARANTEED YOUR TRIP IS RUNNING.
ZAGORIA CIRCUIT ITINERARY

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<td>Mon</td>
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**Day 1**
Fly to Corfu and take a taxi to the hotel. Your leader will meet you in the evening in the hotel.

**Day 2**
From Corfu we travel by ferry and taxi, via Igoumenitsa and Ioannina to the mountain village of Monodendri. Travelling time will be about five hours, so once we are established in our pension there should be time to stretch the legs in the afternoon and visit one of the viewpoints on the edge of the Vikos Gorge.

**Day 3**
A long descent takes us down to the dry riverbed at the bottom of the gorge. Most of the rest of the day is spent walking down the gorge, sometimes in the riverbed, sometimes high on the bank above. It is very shady under the trees as we go, and water can be replenished part way along the gorge. Eventually we reach the Voidumatis spring, where all of a sudden the river is full of ice cold water. From here a steep ascent takes us up to the village of Papingo for the night. 6 to 8 hours walking.

**Day 4**
A good mule trail ascends through forest and then open moorland to the Astraka refuge (1950m) perched high on a ridge below the summit of Astraka. Four springs en route provide welcome refreshment. We can leave our packs in the refuge and go to visit the Drakolimni (dragon lake) of Gamilla, a secret gem of a tarn nestling in a hollow above the cliffs overhanging the Aoos Gorge. We return to the refuge for the night. 6 to 7 hours walking.

**Day 5**
Today we can go to visit the Drakolimni (dragon lake) of Gamilla, a secret gem of a tarn nestling in a hollow above the cliffs overhanging the Aoos gorge. It is a delightful place to ‘chill out’ (literally if you are brave enough to go for a swim) for a while. We return to the refuge for the night. 3+ hours walking.

**Day 6**
Today we cross high pastures between Gamilla and Astraka, and descend to the village of Tsepelovo. 5 to 6 hours walking.

**Day 7**
Free day in and around Tsepelovo to visit the Vikakis gorge, Kipi and the 3-arched bridge.

**Day 8**
We travel back to Corfu town by taxi and ferry. In the evening we can wander the narrow streets of what really is a delightful old town despite the proliferation of tourist shops.

**Day 9**
Take a taxi back to the airport to connect with your flight back home - or maybe you want to stay on and walk the ‘Corfu Trail’?