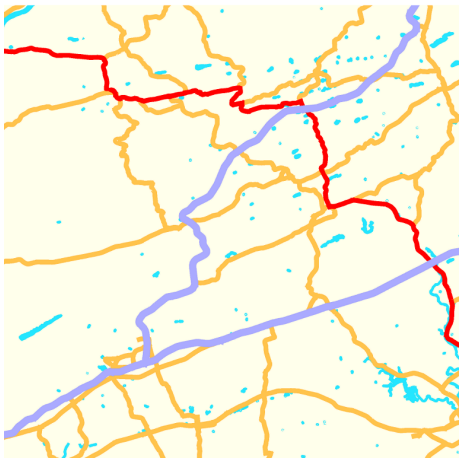


SPRING & AUTUMN WINTER SUN WALKING

type :	Self-Guided Hiking Tours Caminos
level :	
duration :	8 days
period:	Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct
code:	GRSW036

Menalon Trail, in Greece - Greece

8 days, PRICE FROM *€ 675*



The Menalon Trail is a 75 km long mountain trail that is qualified by the Leading Quality Trails-Best of Europe.

It begins in **Stemnitsa, located in the heart of the Peloponnese**. Through the lush Lousios Gorge, the Menalon Trail straddles the Western Menalon massif and runs through the **Valley of the Mylaon River** until the lively town of **Vytina**. The Menalon Trail then continues through **lush forests, across bridges and through pretty villages.**

Being awarded with the certificate, **the Menalon Trail is well-signposted and well-maintained.**

Through the **dramatic Lousios gorge**, with a handful of impressive monasteries built on its cliffs, you reach **Dimitsana**. Dense forests surround you on the stretch via Zygovisti, across the mountain pass Bilani to the remote village of **Elati**. This is followed by a short but great day along the Mylaon River to **Vytina**, famous for its Black Marble production.

The next day you wander slightly off the Menalon Trail, so as not to miss the pretty stone bridge which crosses over the Mylaon River. Back on the main trail, you continue to **Nymfasia** and stay overnight in small houses overlooking the area called **Mavra Lithari:** Black Stone.

Route

Day 1 Arrival in Stemnitsa

Arrival in Stemnitsa from Athens or Kalamata airport. You may visit the Menalon trail office in the central square of Stemnitsa for a briefing. Stemnitsa is traditionally the village of goldsmiths and still houses the Stemnitsa's Silver and Goldsmith School. There is also a nice folk museum.

Day 2 Through the Lousios gorge to Dimitsana, 13 km

Departing from Stemnitsa the path zigzags down into the valley and via an old mule track you reach the Prodomos Monastery hanging on the high cliffs. After a visit you continue along the path that traverses the gorge. You may ascend to the Old Philosophou Monastery dating back to 963 before continuing to the New Philosophou Monastery that was founded in 1691.

Through lush vegetation you ascend via the left bank of the Lousios River towards Dimitsana. Via the Tzani bridge you go across the river and come to the very interesting Open Air Water Power Museum. Nearby you find watermills and gun powder mills, that made the fame and wealth of Dimitsana, a town built on the ruins of ancient Theftis.

Distance: 13 km

Elevation gain: +780/-910 m

Day 3 From Dimitsana to Elati, 19,5 km

The section Dimitsana-Zygovisti ascends from the Lousios valley to the outskirts of the pine forest. The footpath ascends gently. From the church of St. Paraskevi you will enjoy splendid views of the median basin of Lousios river with the settlements of Dimitsana, Paliochori and Zatouna standing out in the wooded landscape. You continue via footpaths and dirt roads through old agricultural fields with remarkable threshing floors. Zygovisti played an important role in the Greek independence war of 1821. There is a big Memorial dedicated to the event. After a break at the local café the route continues and straddles the Western Menalon massif. First through a beautiful ravine to the country church of Agios Georgios and the adjacent spring. Then the track goes uphill through dense forests until the saddle from where you can optionally ascend the Pliovouni summit of 1643m, the highest peak of this route. After this demanding section, you descend via small roads and paths, passing fountains and chapels, to the mountain settlement of Elati.

Distance: 19,5 km

Elevation gain: +1215/-995 m

Day 4 From Elati to Vytina, 9 km

You may visit the woodcraft workshop before descending from Elati to the riverbed of the Mylaon River. You come past the Pirgaki Springs that supply Vytina with water and then the stone built Makrinou Fountain, a nice place for a short break. Further along the river the vegetation becomes even more rich with high plane trees.You walk past abandoned watermills and across a nice wooden bridge. Then you leave the valley and zigzag uphill via a path carved in rock to the Artotsi Fountain. Nearby is the Agia Paraskevi church from which you have great views over the valley and mountain. Via small roads you reach Vytina. Serving as the center village of the region, it offers all facilities and nice local food.

Distance: 9 km

Elevation gain: +350/-500 m

Day 5 From Vytina to Nymfasia via Zarziou bridge, 12 km

From Vytina you head back to the Artotsi Fountain and descend via a zigzagging path into the valley of the Mylaon River. At the pretty wooden bridge, you now follow the river in northerly direction. In the area called Zarzi, you will see the very beautiful single-arch bridge of Zarzi with 2 relieving openings on the sides. The path takes you along past a peculiar shaped limestone pillar. Gradually you ascend and come to Old Vytina. Here you are back on the Menalon Trail that leads you to Mavra Litharia, a massive limestone boulder in the riverbed of the Mylaon River, thus creating an impressive gorge. You come to a second stone bridge that once secured the connection between Vytina and the western Gortynian villages. The trail descends to a short gorge before ascending gently through a rock-and-shrub landscape. Leading through oak and spruce forests, the trail descends to Nymfasia, a small village. You follow the route towards Kernitsas Monastery and just before the monastery head to your accommodation.

Distance: 12 km

Elevation gain: +630/-830 m

Day 6 From Nymfasia via Magouliana to Valtesiniko, 16 km

You walk to the Kernitsa Bridge and ascend via a steep path to the Kernitsas Monastery, a big monastic complex surrounded by well-maintained terraced fields. After a visit you cross a dense pine forest and arrive at the Sfyrida Hermitage with a spring in front. Imagine how ascetes must have isolated themselves from the community in this mystic atmosphere. You traverse the foot of the long steep slope of Kastro. An old pathway leads you along the Gavros Spring. You enter the small settlement of Magouliana where you can find a tavern or café.

Leaving Magouliana behind, you come to a point with splendid views, surrounded by stone built threshing floors. You descend toward the old sanatorium, known as the Mana Sanatorium. A good path leads you in a gradual ascend to the nice village Valtesiniko. In the center of this village, well-known for its woodcarvers, there are many nice taverns to choose from for your evening meal.

Distance: 16 km

Elevation gain: +1200/-930 m

Day 7 From Valtesiniko to Lagkadia, 14,3 km

From the upper peripheral road of Valtesiniko Village, we have splendid views over the northern plains. Via a cement road you walk up to 1250 meter. Via a footpath you walk along the ridge where the Byzantine Fortress of Valtesiniko is nested. Then you descend through open landscape with stunning views until the church of Agia Triada. The route now traverses an extensive pine forest and you gain some altitude before going down again until the Krya Vrysi fountain. You ascend the path to the saddle and then, finally, on the western edge of this zone, you will see Lagkadia ahead. Through fields and along a small spring you come to the outskirts of Lagkadia where the Rapi Watermills are situated. The Menalon Trail ends in the center of Lagkadia, the village of the stone builders.

Distance: 14,3 km

Elevation gain: +810/-980 m

Day 8 Goodbye Lagkadia!

After breakfast your arrangement comes to an end. Travel to Athens or Kalamata Airport

Practical info

Thanks to our special APP, you will be able to follow the track of the whole trip on your mobile phone, with no need for internet. GPS tracks are available on request.

Included

What is included

- 7 Nights in double room in *** hotels with breakfast
- luggage transportation from hotel to hotel
- 10 Euros contribution to the non-profit organization of the Menalon Trail
- souvenir from the Menalon Trail
- maps and detailed description of the itinerary
- Medical and luggage travel insurance
- 24h phone assistance

What is not included

- Transfers to the starting location and from the arriving location of the tour
- lunches and dinners, if not otherwise stated
- visits and entrance fees - tips
- personal expense
- possible sojourn taxes
- everything that is not mentioned in the "What is included" section.

Optional Services

These services can be added to the ones included in the base price of the tour:

- Single room supplement
- cancellation insurance
- Transfers to reach the starting location or to leave the arriving location of the tour, which will be quoted on request.