



## GREECE – NEED TO KNOW

- **Language:** Greek. English widely spoken, which is just as well. Greek is tough to learn.
- **Visa:** Not necessary for UK passport holders for visits up to 90 days.
- **Currency:** Euro.
- **Jabs:** None compulsory, but make sure your tetanus is up to date.
- **Cost of fuel:** Diesel £1.26/litre, petrol £1.43.
- **Time difference to UK:** +2hr
- **Drive on the right.**
- **Where we stayed:** Alisachni guest house, Pouri, Pelion (alisachne.gr); Elena guest house, Meteora (elenaguesthouse.com).
- **Food to try:** Sardela (sardines), tiropitari (baked cheese), kodosouvli (grilled lamb with tomatoes and onions), paedakia (grilled lamb chops), soupia sto melani (cuttlefish in ink), tsipoura (bream from the Aegean), kalamari teganito (fried squid – make sure it's fresh).
- **Drinks:** The local Alfa lager (5% ABV) is very refreshing after a long day's driving. The adventurous can sample Tsipouro, a 36% spirit distilled from grapes.
- **How to get there:** There are various ways – drive to Ancona in Italy (900 miles) and take the 15hr ferry to Igoumenitsa; go further to the Brindisi ferry (1240 miles); or travel all of the way on land via Germany, Austria, Serbia etc (1800 miles). By comparison, to drive to Algeciras in Spain for the Morocco ferry is about 1350 miles.
- **Further information:** offroadtogreece.com.
- **Fancy trying it?** LRO Adventure Club's Vince Cobley is planning an initial recce trip to Greece with Kostas Liapis in October and is looking for readers to join in. He expects the cost per vehicle to be about £500. Get more details from Vince on 01858 535552, protrax@aol.com.

And there would be no problem if Kostas were to stray into one of these places: as a volunteer firefighter, he has the necessary permit.

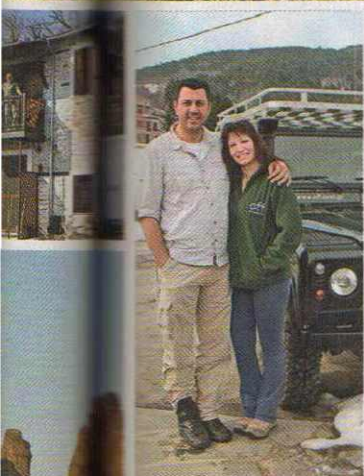
We stop for a coffee and Kostas lays his Anavasi maps on the table, showing us the literally hundreds of yellow-and-white-marked routes that criss-cross Greece's rugged terrain – all of which are unsurfaced rights of way. This is looking like a Land Rover driver's paradise, especially as Kostas adds that wild camping is widely permitted, including on many of the secluded beaches that can only be reached by mountain tracks. And with Greece's current well-publicised financial problems, the country is keen to attract tourists, with accommodation and restaurant prices noticeably lower than in recent times.

Our journey continues and we head north through the large town of Volos, then east to the Pelion region,

the home of the half-man, half-horse centaurs of Greek mythology. The sun was shining in Athens, but as we pass the 1100-metre-high Chania ski resort the ground is snow-covered, with some monster drifts from a heavy snowfall a month previously. Then we descend into the sunshine again towards the Aegean coast, through the town of Zagora to the small, traditional village of Pouri. This lovely step back in time has delightful slate-roofed stone cottages, linked by steeply spiralling footpaths.

Our accommodation for the night is the comfortably furnished Alisachni guest house. This is where travelling with a local guide pays off – not only do they know where to find the best places to drive, but they also know the best accommodation and eateries.

And talking of eating, we head back into Zagora to the roadside Meintani taverna. This is a real gem, with the



Above: Our hosts, Kostas and Eleni. Right: This beautiful beach is one location Kostas uses for wild camping

