



Kostas brews some mugs of refreshing mountain tea, made from sideritis



meat dishes keep on coming until, once again, we're absolutely stuffed.

Next day, breakfast is accompanied by fresh bread from Kostas's local baker, who uses a traditional wood oven. And yes, it's just as delicious as it sounds.

Then we drive through Steni and head towards a series of forest tracks. We climb through the woodland and out on to tracks that rise steeply up the side of Mount Dirfis before plunging to the Aegean – and some lovely beaches. Snow blocks our access to some tracks, but there are so many we can drive.

The scenery seems to change as we turn each corner – first we're in an area that's reminiscent of Austria's pine forests, then we're on to routes like Colorado's rugged mountain trails.

Heading back towards Steni we turn on to more forest tracks, driving through an

area rich with sweet chestnut trees, then plane trees. Several hairpin bends have streams running across them, but all are easily negotiable.

Another track out of the village takes us through an area that reminds Pat and I of the Pyrenees – with forests, mountain tracks and rugged rocky outcrops. Then we're into what looks like Scotland's forest trails. There's an area of peanut trees and then the track follows the course of a river.

We've encountered a rich variety of flora and terrain in a relatively small area. The tracks have varied from flat gravel to rocky sections with deep wash-outs.

We stop in a walnut grove to brew a cup of mountain tea, which Kostas makes from dried sideritis plant leaves.

This is gathered from rocky slopes at altitudes over 1000 metres and is a

refreshing drink that the Greeks use as a cure for many ailments.

Our final few hours of driving is in more barren terrain near Mount Ksirovouni. We climb steeply, and the sheer drops alongside the tracks are maybe not for the faint-hearted. Just take it nice and slow and admire the breathtaking views.

It's a fitting place to end what is a short but excellent adventure. We've only sampled a very small percentage of the tracks that can be driven on this island, and there's so much more to go at in the rest of Greece. Without doubt the country has a lot to offer 4x4 drivers – seemingly unlimited routes, wild camping, secret beaches, amazing food, sunshine and fabulous hospitality everywhere. Oh, and there's the history and culture in the unlikely event you get bored with the off-road driving. **LRO**

Above: Greece offers a wide variety of different terrains, with ever-changing scenery. These forest tracks have several stream crossings, but all are easily negotiable in a Land Rover. Below: The tracks that climb to Mount Ksirovouni have sheer drops to the side, but the scenery is breathtaking and definitely big on the 'wow' factor



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