



Kalamata

A lifetime experience



MUNICIPALITY OF KALAMATA, GREECE

Cruise guide

The character of the city

Built along the head of the Messinian Gulf, at the foot of Mount Taygetos, Kalamata (pop. 57,567) is the economic, commercial and cultural center of South Peloponnese, in Greece.

The city is full of innumerable natural, architectural and cultural attractions. At the same time it lies at the heart of a region with rich history and world-class monuments - located about an hour away – such as ancient Messini, the Palace of Nestor, ancient Olympia, the Temple of Apollo Epicurius, Mani and Mystras and the Venetian castles of Messinia.

This is where the rich past meets the city's exciting present. A modern, all-year-round bustling town which serves 100,000 people every day. A city with a hospital of the highest standards, an international airport, university departments and a Technological Educational Institute, modern cultural venues and important sports facilities.

The cultural activities, the historical and religious monuments, the museums, the sea-and-mountain combination and the distinguished local products – mainstays of the Mediterranean diet – are signature features unique to the city's character.

Nightlife is another vibrant aspect of Kalamata and its suburbs. Bars and cozy little tavernas are open in the Historic Center during the winter months, while during the summer nightlife shifts towards the clubs and the beach bars located by the sea. The nightclubs of neighboring Verga, with their incredible sea and city view, are ideal places for a special evening out.

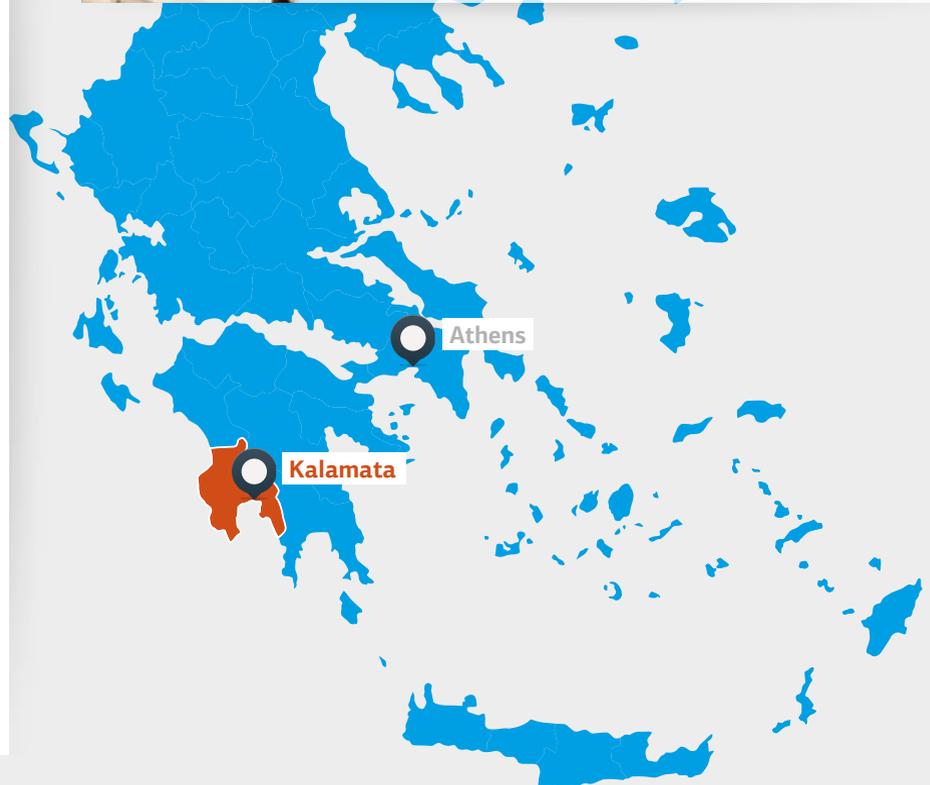
Website: www.kalamata.gr



A message from the Mayor of Kalamata

Kalamata has a safe port, suitable for cruise tourism. It is a beautiful city, offering the possibility to visit interesting local sites, as well as to take excursions to world renowned sites, such as ancient Olympia, ancient Messini and Mystras. We look forward to welcoming you and showing you the traditional Greek hospitality!

Panagiotis E. Nikas





A look at history

Myth says that the founder of the city was Pharis, the son of Hermes and Phylodameia. It is from him that the ancient name of the city, Pharae, comes from.

Pharae was built where the Frankish castle is standing nowadays, and as Homer mentions in the *Iliad*, the city participated in the Trojan War. It later fell to the Laconians, until it was incorporated into the neighboring territory of Messini. It gradually lost its importance however.

By the 10th century AD, the city was already known as Kalamata, while in the 12th century it had already acquired great importance. It would flourish after its occupation by the Franks (1205). It is worth mentioning that one of the city's rulers, William of Villehardouin, his birthplace being Kalamata, was also known as "Kalomatis".

After 1470, the city will be subjected to a long period of Ottoman rule, interrupted by brief periods of Venetian rule.

In 23 March 1821 Kalamata became the first city to be liberated from the Ottoman rule. On that day, the revolutionary Greek forces were under the command of generals Theodoros Kolokotronis, Petrobey Mavromichalis, Nikitaras and Papaflessas. The liberation was followed by a doxology performed in the church of the Holy Apostles (a symbol of the city), where the revolutionary flags were blessed.

This was followed by a century of prosperity, based upon the trade of agricultural goods produced in the Messinian land (figs, olive oil, olives, silk and currants) as well as the local craft production. During these years, the city became known as "the Marseilles of Morea" (Peloponnese).



The port

Due to its important geographical position, the harbor of Kalamata has always been a timeless source of life and activity for the city. The medium-size artificial port is located on the northeastern half of the Messinian Gulf (37° 01' 28" N- 22° 07' 00" E) occupying a land area of 40,000 square meters. It is safe at all weather conditions – especially when north winds are blowing. Its entrance is looking to the south-east and is 145 m wide and approximately 10 m deep. It is protected from the waves caused by the southwest, south, east and southeast winds with two breakwaters: the south one, 1,100 m long and the south-southeast one, which is 395 m long.

The port meets all European and international safety regulations and the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, and has obtained certification for receiving cruise ships and mega yachts. The carrying capacity of the port facilities ensures high standards for the reception of up to 3,500 passengers. At the same time, it handles a significant portion of the imports and exports of Greece.

The Municipality of Kalamata provides garbage management for the solid waste of cruise vessels, for a low fee.

The port area was initially inhabited on its western side. There, before the Greek War of Independence of 1821, warehouses, stores and the first customs office were erected. At that time, sea transport was taking place with boats and barges. In 1860, a new settlement appeared on the eastern side of the port. The construction of the port was completed in 1901.





The Castle

It is standing in the northern part of the city, on a low hill, the Nedon river running at its foot. On that same hill, Pharis built the acropolis of Pharae. It was there that the palaces of the kings of the ancient city were. On its ruins, the Byzantines built a Christian church (6th century). The site was later fortified.

It is during the Frankish rule (13th century), especially under the rule of the Villehardouin dynasty, that the Castle acquired its present form. The fortification was preserved and underwent additions during the years of the Venetian and the Ottoman rule.



The Holy Apostles

It is the symbol of the city, since it is associated with the start of the Greek War of Independence. It is located on the 23rd March 1821 (23 Martiou) Square, that was named after the date on which the city was liberated from the Ottomans. Its initial structure dates back to the 11th-12th century.



Vasileos Georgiou II Square

Kalamata's central square, with plenty of cafés and patisseries. It is the busiest part of the city. It was first constructed in 1928 and the most recent renovation took place between 2012 and 2013. At its southern part one can find the characteristic fountain called "Psarakia". Another fountain is situated at its northern side. There are plenty of flower beds and a lot of greenery along the square. It is around this square that the heart of the shopping center is beating.





Church of Ypapanti

A majestic church that dominates the homonymous square. It is the Cathedral of Kalamata. Its construction began in 1860 and it was inaugurated in 1873.



Aristomenous Street

It was the first road to be constructed (1871) in order to connect the city with the seafront. Since then, it remains a central axis for Kalamata and a timeless point of reference. By walking along Aristomenous street, one can find commercial stores, the Vasileos Georgiou II Square, public authorities, banks and the Municipal Railway Park.



Kalograion Monastery

It was founded in 1796 and is dedicated to Saints Constantine and Helen. It is located near the Castle and the Church of Ypapanti. Since early times the nunnery stood out as a famous center for the production of silk textiles, amongst which the renowned handkerchiefs of Kalamata.



Municipal Railway Park

The open-air museum and park occupies an area of 54,000 sq. meters and has been operating since 1986. It is also the home of cultural activities. Apart from steam locomotives and carriages, fountains and small lakes, the park also has sports courts, playgrounds, an open-air amphitheater and a snack bar (at the old station).



Dance Hall

It was constructed with funding from the European Union in order to house the activities of the Kalamata International Dance Center during the International Dance Festival (July) as well as cultural events that take place throughout the year. It first opened its doors in July 2013 and every year it welcomes the dance world's most prestigious names.



Neoclassical buildings

Elegant buildings erected during the city's most prosperous years (1880-1920). They are mainly gathered in the northern part of Aristomenous street and the eastern part of the jetty (Navarinou street). Many of these buildings are today used by the Municipality of Kalamata.



Paplomatadika, 23 Martiou Square

The liveliest part of the Historic Center and the heart of entertainment. Paved pedestrian streets, traditional stores, cozy ouzo places, bars and cafés make a picturesque setting.





Museums - Galleries

Archaeological Museum of Messinia

It is situated in the Historic Center, just where the old City Market once was placed. This is a building where findings from all over Messinia are modernly displayed in sections that follow space and time divisions. It covers the course of history in the region from Prehistory up to the Byzantine years.

Benaki and Agiou Ioanni streets. Tel.: 27210 83485.

Historical and Folklore Museum of Kalamata

It is located in the Historic Center and gives visitors the opportunity to engage with the more recent (pre-industrial) past of the city: the people's everyday life in Kalamata, agricultural artisanship, the art of weaving, pottery and urban professions. **Agiou Ioanni and Kyriakou streets. Tel.: 27210 28449.**

Military Museum of Kalamata

The museum, through various displays, texts, photographic and audiovisual material, narrates the Greek military history, from the Greek War of Independence of 1821 to the present day. It lies in the Historic Center.

10 Mitropolitou Meletiou street. Tel.: 27210 21219.

Contemporary Greek Art Gallery

It is housed in the Municipal Cultural Center and counts more than 430 works of art (paintings, drawings, engravings, constructions, sculptures) by eminent 20th century Greek painters and local artists.

33 Aristomenous street. Tel.: 27210 22607.

Municipal Gallery "A. Tassos"

It is situated in the Historic Center and includes works of art by the Messinian engraver A. Tassos, as well as 350 works of various art movements that were offered to the city by Greek artists following the devastating 1986 earthquakes. **5 Papazoglou street. Tel.: 27210 88991.**



The coast



The central point of the port is Teloneiou (Customs Office) Square, where the prominent buildings of the Customs Office and the Port Authority, a complex of eclectic and neoclassical features, are located. The Port Park, the beginning of Aristomenous street and the Municipal Railway Park are situated just behind these buildings. West of the square, in just a few minutes walking distance, one can find the city's marina, which is a docking place for many boats (private or rented) and the location of many restaurants.

On that same side there are two buildings that remind us of the city's industrial and commercial past and the time when the port was a nationally significant trade hub bustling with merchants:

- The Autonomous Raisin Organization building, the design of which was based on French examples, was erected at a time when the trade of raisins (currants) was thriving (in the early 20th century)
- The Roller Mills of Messinia "Evangelistria", which were founded in 1925 and shut down in 1991.

East of the jetty, there is a beach extending for 2.5 km, ideal not only for strolling but also for swimming in its crystal clear waters.



All along the beach line, on the vibrant, full-of-life (especially during the summer months) Navarinou street, one can find traditional but also contemporary dining places. There are also many modernly designed hotels, offering top-quality services that satisfy all clients' needs, from simple accommodation to hosting large conferences.



From the coast to the Historic Center



From the port one can walk towards the center of Kalamata, following the broad red-paved sidewalk of Faron street, which is part of a 5.5 km long pedestrian walkway that runs through the city. Useful signs help pedestrians reach the center within 20'. The sidewalk has ramps for facilitating the access of the disabled, as well as benches for taking a walk-break to enjoy Faron street's beautiful trees and flowers.

One can also reach the city center by walking through the Municipal Railway Park, which can be accessed through the bikeway that runs along the port.

Through Faron street and then through Platonos street, or through the Municipal Railway Park, visitors will reach Aristomenous street, the busiest and most commercial street of the city.

By following it towards the north, visitors will reach the shopping district, where dozens of stores offer a great range of clothing, shoes, jewelry, cosmetics, top-quality local products etc. at affordable prices. The street has many cafés, restaurants and places for ouzo and meze.



The Historic Center is located north of the shopping district, around the Holy Apostles Church, and south of the Castle. Wandering through its narrow alleys is like travelling back in time. There, visitors have the opportunity to discover old buildings that survived the passage of time, mansions, stone-built churches, museums, stores that sell local products, cafés, meze places and restaurants.



Cycling in Kalamata

The bikeway of Kalamata is 4 km long. It runs through the center and offers an alternative sightseeing experience. It starts from Othonos square and continues through Nedontos street, Vasileos Georgiou II square, Aristomenous street, the Municipal Railway Park and Navarinou street. It ends at the Anastasi Church square by the beach. On Navarinou street, cyclists can enjoy the sea view to the breathtaking Messinian Gulf.



Enjoying the sea



Visitors of Kalamata can enjoy a swim anywhere along the city's coastal zone (Navarinou street), in just a few minutes drive from the city center. Beaches are both sandy and shingle, while the waters are crystal clear.



This is thanks to Kalamata's wastewater treatment facilities, which ensure that the waters of the Messinian Gulf remain clean, thus upgrading the environment and helping improve life quality. The facilities have been in operation since 1985. Further to their upgrade and extension completed in 2015, the facilities are capable of serving 120,000 residents in a thirty-year perspective.

One can also swim along the coast, east of the city, where the bays of Verga, Almiros, Mikri Mantinea and Kitries are situated within a 20' drive maximum. These beaches are full of beach bars and clubs, while one can also enjoy exciting water sports (water skiing, windsurfing, etc.).

1. Ναυτικός Όμιλος / Sailing Club
2. Λιμεναρχείο / Port Authority
3. ΕΛΤΑ / Post Office
4. Τελωνείο / Customs
5. Κολυμβητήριο / Swimming Pool
6. Διοικητήριο / Government House
7. Δικαστήρια / Courthouse
8. Δημοτικό Θέατρο / Municipal Theater
9. Σταθμός ΟΣΕ / Railway Station
10. ΕΛΤΑ / Post Office
11. Πνευματικό Κέντρο / Cultural Center
12. Δημαρχείο / Town Hall
13. Πλατεία Φραγκόλιμνας / Frangolimnas Sq.
14. Πλατεία Μαυρομυχάλη / Manvrichali Sq.
15. Πλατεία 23ης Μαρτίου / 23 Martiou Sq.
16. Πλατεία Οθωνος / Othonos Sq.
17. Αμφιθέατρο Κάστρου / Castle Theater
18. Λαογραφικό Μουσείο / Folklore Museum
19. Δημοτικό Ωδείο / Municipal Conservatory
20. Αρχαιολογικό Μουσείο / Archaeological Museum
21. Δημοτική Πινακοθήκη / Municipal Art Gallery
22. Μέγαρο Χορού / Dance Hall
23. ΚΤΕΑ / Intercity BUS



ΓΟΥΛΙΜΙΔΕΣ
GOULIMIDES

προς Σπάρτη
to Sparta

προς Αθήνα
to Athens

προς Μάνη
to Mani

ΑΝΘΟΥΠΟΛΗ
ANTHOUPOLI

PACH
RACHE

ΚΤΕΑ
Intercity BUS

NEW
MARKET

NEA
ΑΓΟΡΑ

ΚΑΣΤΡΟ
CASTLE

NEKPOTAΦEIO
CEMETERY

ANATOLIKO
KENTPO
EASTERN
CENTER

Πανεπιστήμιο Πελοποννήσου
University of the Peloponnese

ΑΡΙΣΤΕΙΔΟΥ
ARISTEIDOU

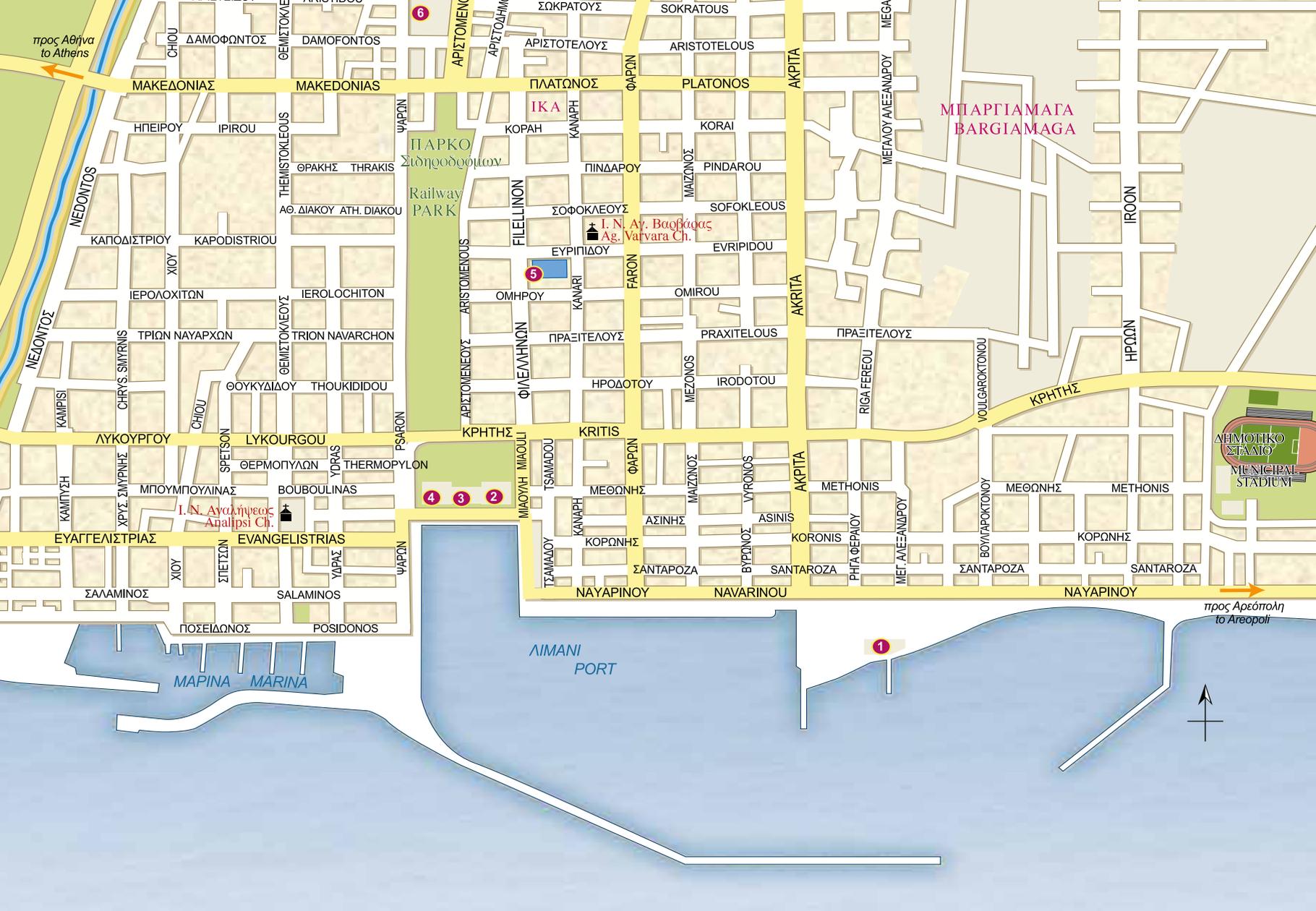
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LOU ALEXANDROU

ΝΩΡΗ
NORH

ΛΟΥ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ
LOU ALEXANDROU



προς Αθήνα
to Athens

προς Αρεόπολη
to Aigio

ΜΠΑΡΓΙΑΜΑΓΑ
BARGIAMAGA

ΛΙΜΑΝΙ
PORT

ΜΑΡΙΝΑ
MARINA

ΔΗΜΟΤΙΚΟ ΣΤΑΔΙΟ
MUNICIPAL STADIUM

Ι. Ν. Αγ. Βαρβάρας
Ag. Varvara Ch.

ΠΑΡΚΟ
Σιδηροδρομίων
Railway PARK

6

ΙΚΑ

5

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3

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1



ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑΣ

ΠΛΑΤΩΝΟΣ

PLATONOS

ΗΠΕΙΡΟΥ

ΙΡΙΟΥ

ΚΟΡΑΗ

ΚΑΝΑΡΗ

KORAI

ΚΑΡΟΔΙΣΤΡΙΟΥ

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ΔΗΜΟΤΙΚΟ ΣΤΑΔΙΟ
MUNICIPAL STADIUM



One day cruises by boat

Boats that sail in the summer from the port of Kalamata for one day cruises are giving their passengers the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of the coastline and the seaside villages of a part of the Peloponnese. Travelers can sail along a mosaic of settings and scenes where imposing Venetian castles blend in harmony with the uniqueness of the Greek landscape.

Sapientza

It is located opposite Methoni and is most abundant with rare plants. It has been included in the Natura 2000 network.

Schiza

It is the largest island of the Messinian Oinousses complex. The deepest point of the Mediterranean Sea is located south-west of the island. It is known as the Oinousses Trench (5,121m deep).

Methoni

The "ampeloessa" –the place "rich in vines"– according to Homer. Its castle is amongst the most important in Greece. It was built following the fall of Methoni to the Venetians (1209), on a rock that extends into the sea, separated from land with an artificial moat.

Foinikounta

Known ever since antiquity, it is located opposite Schiza, halfway between Methoni and Koroni. It has wonderful sandy beaches.

Venetiko

The rocky island of the Messinian Oinousses, opposite the Akritas cape, the southernmost tip of Messinia.

Koroni

A town famous for the Venetian castle that dominates the settlement from above.

Oitilo's Gulf

A place in Mani with a long history, also mentioned by Homer. Castles, traditional villages and important monasteries are a few of the gulf's attractions.

Gulf of Diros

A magnificent gulf of Mani. One of the most beautiful lake caves in the world can be found here along with the Diros Neolithic Museum.



Mount Taygetos

Also known as the “male mountain”, Taygetos rises imposingly a few kilometers east of Kalamata. It rises to 2,407 m and is about 115 km long. It is the natural border between Messinia and Laconia and extends all the way to cape Taenaro (Matapan).

Its rich vegetation mainly includes black pine trees and firs. Additionally, it has rich flora (over 700 plant species, 28 local endemic) and bird fauna (85 bird species, the most important being the golden eagle, the short-toed snake eagle, the Bonelli’s eagle, the peregrine falcon and many migratory birds).

It is also known for its impressive canyons with deep slopes, such as Vyros (which can be approached through Kardamili) and Rintomo (that ends on the coast of Santova). The purely natural beauty of the mountain, and its unique ridge – one of the longest alpine routes in Greece – have made Taygetos a top destination for all year round mountain sports (hiking, climbing, mountaineering). Another point of reference is the Tourist Kiosk, situated in the magnificent landscape of Alagonia, on the Kalamata-Sparta route.

Many picturesque villages lie on the Messinian slopes of Mount Taygetos; they have rich history, traditional buildings, important religious pilgrimages and excellent natural surroundings.



Mystras - 60'

A famous castle city (6 km from Sparta); one of its despots was Constantine Palaiologos, who later became the last Byzantine emperor. Against the ravages of time, the abandoned yet breathtaking city retains wonderful churches (Pantanassa, Agios Demetrios, Perivleptos etc.) with excellent murals, restored palaces, fortifications and mansions. The castle was built in 1249, following the invasion of the Franks in the Peloponnese. In 1262, it was handed over to the Byzantines, and in 1460 it fell to the Turks.

Tel.: 27310 83377, 27310 25363



Temple of Apollo Epicurius - 90'

It sits at an elevation of 1,130 m at Bassae near Figaleia, in Messinia, but also quite near the border with Iliia and Arcadia. It was constructed around 420-400 BC, it is said that it was designed by Ictinus, one of the architects of the Parthenon, and it is one of the most important temples of the ancient world. The metopes coming from the wonderful frieze, today displayed at the British Museum in London, were depicting scenes from battles with the Amazons and the Centaurs.

Tel.: 26260 22254



Pylos - 60'

Pylos is situated on the southwestern tip of the Peloponnese, its harbor being a very safe anchorage, since the oblong Sfaktiria Island provides protection to Navarino Bay from the storms caused in the Ionian Sea. It was at this bay that the decisive battle that marked the liberation of Greece from the Ottomans took place in 1827 – between the fleet of the allied powers of Great Britain, France and Russia and the Ottoman-Egyptian fleet. Pylos has been developed into a tourist destination thanks to its quaint feel, the charming Niokastro (that dominates from above) and Palaiokastro (which rises on the opposite side), the beautiful coastline with Giailova and Voidokilia, as well as the presence of Costa Navarino, a unique tourist resort that includes luxurious accommodation, golf courts, sports facilities, as well as conference halls and caters for other recreational activities.



The Palace of Nestor - 60'

It is situated on the hill of Ano Eglianos (14 km north of Pylos) and is the best preserved Mycenaean palace discovered. The palace, the ruler of which is considered to be the wise king Nestor, flourished during 1300-1200 BC. The complex that had a total of 105 rooms was decorated with colorful murals, had a central sewage system and was surrounded by a fortified wall. It was destroyed by a fire around 1200 BC. During its excavation, 1,250 Linear B tablets came to light, as well as more findings that are kept at the Archaeological Museum of neighboring Chora.

**Tel.: 27630 31437
(archaeological site),
27630 31358 (museum)**



Ancient Messini - 45'

One of the most important cities of the ancient world. It was founded in 370 BC and it came to light, mainly thanks to professor P. Themelis, after 1986. Excavations in the site have revealed a theater (3rd-2nd century BC), the Asclepieion, the Arsinoe fountain, sanctuaries, Roman mansions, the Stadium and the Gymnasium. The theater, which has undergone an exceptional restoration, reopened in 2013 after 1,300 years of "silence", hence becoming a cultural oasis.

**Tel.: 27240 51201
(archaeological site & museum)**



Ancient Olympia - 90'

A world famous site and the birthplace of the Olympic Games, held since 776 BC. The site included the Temple of Zeus, which housed the chryselephantine (gold and ivory) statue of the god, sculpted by Phidias, and one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Today, visitors can explore the ruins of the ancient sports facilities, the sanctuary sites, the public and accommodation spaces, as well as the museum that houses famous findings such as the *Hermes of Praxiteles* and the *Nike of Paionios*.

**Tel.: 26240 22517 (archaeological site),
26240 22742 (museum)**



Diros Caves - 90'

Amongst the most beautiful accessible caves in the world, the cave of Glyfada was formed by many thousands of years of geologic activity. The labyrinth-like water corridors and the impressive stalactites and stalagmites reflected against the water, are creating a mysterious setting of unparalleled beauty. The tour inside the cave takes place in part by boat and in part on foot. The nearby Diros Neolithic Museum takes visitors through the story of the people that dwelled in the Diros caves a very long time ago.

**Tel.: 27330 52222 (for the caves),
27330 52223 (museum)**



Mani - up to 60'

A place with unique traditional architecture. The arid mountain masses are the home of dozens of stone-house villages: war-towers, fortified houses, castles, churches and cobbled alleys. Untamed people have lived here with their own customs and lifestyle. They played an important role in Greek history – especially during the 1821 War of Independence. On the Messinian side the best known settlements are the charming Kardamyli (36 km from Kalamata) and the touristic Stoupa (44 km from Kalamata), while Areopoli, Vatheia and Limeni are dominating the Laconian side.

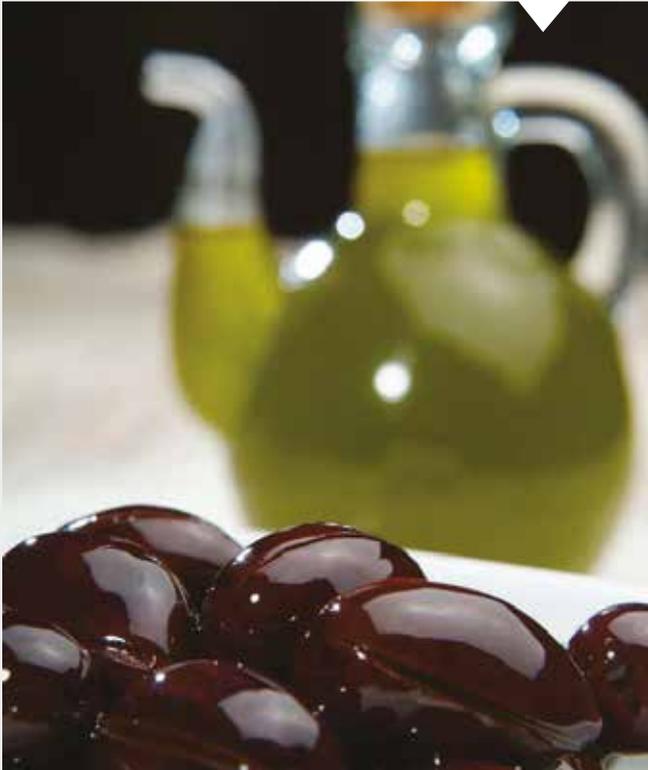
 **Excursions**





Traditional local products

These are agricultural or cottage industry goods produced locally and with a century-long tradition behind them. They are timeless ingredients of the local cuisine and they make a complete Mediterranean menu, the diet that helps extend lifespan and improves our health and physical well-being.



Kalamata PDO Extra Virgin Olive Oil

One hundred percent extra virgin olive oil that has received a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO). It is at least 95% of Koroneiki variety and is produced by olive extraction with the use of mechanical means only. Kalamata PDO extra virgin olive oil can be green or green/golden, of medium fruity flavor with an aroma of green olive fruit, of slight bitterness and of slight to medium pungency. Thanks to its consistency, it protects against coronary artery disease and it benefits the homeostasis within the human body.

PDO Kalamata table olives

World-famous for their tasty flavor, the olives of Kalamata have been certified as a PDO product and are the highest-quality black edible olives. They are handpicked when ripe and they are cured with the use of natural means. When preserved in brine with olive oil they become a delicious meze of the highest nutritional value, high in oleuropein, a substance that contributes towards good health. The perfect accompaniment of several dishes.



Sfela

A semi-hard, really salty cheese of fabulous aroma. It is a PDO product made from a mixture of sheep and goat's milk, with no color additives or enhancers. Sfela has a pepperish hint and can be consumed plain or with crispy lalaghia, in the form of saganaki (prepared in a frying pan), in pies or as a side to many dishes. Additionally, Messinia produces PDO feta cheese and top-quality graviera, kefalograviera etc.

Dried figs

One of the best-known products of the region. They are naturally sun dried, toothsome-sweet and of the highest nutritional value. Their healing properties have been known ever since Hippocrates' time. They are a good source of energy for our body, and rich in vitamin A, calcium, phosphorus and magnesium. It is also a high-fiber food.

Honey

A top-quality, 100% natural product. Long periods of sunshine, the mild climate and the presence of various aromatic plants in the region benefit its production.

Aromatic plants and herbs

St Johns wort, oregano, bay laurel, thyme, tea plants, sage, mint, chamomile, rosemary – just a few of the plants used for adding aroma and flavor to food or for their medicinal properties.



Dried black raisins (currants)

Dried black raisins (currants) have been a local diet ingredient ever since Homer's time. It's one of the region's basic products since the period of the Venetian rule and its trade thrived towards the end of the 19th century, bringing the unique fruit of the Messinian land all the way to the European salons. Today, it is a standardized product, packed according to all health and safety regulations in order to retain its full aroma and flavor when it reaches consumers. It is of the highest nutritional value, a rich source of vitamins and minerals.

Vinegar

Just a hint of vinegar brings out food flavour. The "Glykadi" (sweet), as vinegar is called in the local dialect, is produced from local grapes and is of excellent quality. The sweet, viscous and aromatic balsamic vinegar made from black raisins and aged in old wooden barrels, is also associated with the region of Kalamata.

Local wines

The vineyards of Messinia are mentioned by Homer, while Pausanias the traveler (2nd century AJC) says that Dionysus first exclaimed "Eviva!" when he tried Messinian wine. The tradition continues until today with the

production of top-quality wines that have won awards in national and international competitions. The local climate and the use of modern means, together with the use of the best vine varieties, and the love, care and passion of the local vine growers and wine makers, are all responsible for this excellent result.

Alcoholic beverages

Ouzo and tsipouro are famous for their quality and for being served with meze. Liqueurs, produced by the local distillers of Kalamata already since the 19th century, are also well-known; they blend tradition with up-to-date trends in order to create interesting flavors and aromas.



Pasteli

Honey and sesame being its basic ingredients, pasteli is a source of vitamin E, calcium, phosphorus, iron and more. Its medicinal properties have been known ever since Herodotus' time; amongst everything else it lowers cholesterol levels, it strengthens our immune system and it has anti-aging action.

Cured meats

Deli meats, favored by the Messinians, with a distinctive taste and aroma. Sausages with orange zest or smoked and salted pork are both known since antiquity and the Middle Ages, and they are still prepared in a traditional way.





Events Calendar

Feast of Ypapanti of Christ



The patron saint of Kalamata is celebrated with great glory on February 2, in the Cathedral of the same name. Thousands of pilgrims are there to watch the procession of the holy icon through the city's main routes.

Carnival festivities

Carnival festivities in Kalamata and the vicinity include the traditional gaitanaki (maypole) folk dance, fires, balloon flying, music, dance and offering of local traditional delicacies.

Carnival of Kalamata

Special and colorful festivities with traditional features. They start at the beginning of the Pre-Lent period and end on the Sunday of Forgiveness, with a fantastic parade.

Carnival of Nedousa

It takes place every Clean Monday (Monday of Lent). The participants are dressed as goats, and wear pastoral bells. They visit houses and collect treats. At noon, a revival of the man's circle of life takes place on the square: ploughing and sowing, the harvest, marriage, death, resurrection.

Reenactment of the Liberation of Kalamata from the Ottoman rule

Celebrations and festivities that take place on 23 Martiou Square and at the Holy Apostles church on 23 March, the day that the 1821 War of Independence started and the city was liberated. A special moment is when the reenactment of the re-occupation of the city by the Greeks is performed, together with a reading of the "Warning to the European courts" which was drawn up by the Messinian Senate.

Religious Music Choir Festival

This is an evening of religious music performances that take place in the Church of Holy Taxiarches on Lazarus Saturday. It is part of the religious happenings of the Holy Week and Easter Sunday.

From Good Friday through to Easter Sunday

The Epitaphios is paraded on Good Friday. The Epitaphios of the Cathedral of Ypapanti is accompanied by the Municipal Marching Band of Kalamata. The Anastasi (Resurrection) is celebrated with great glory in all churches, especially in Ypapanti. On Easter Sunday, the Agape (Love) Vesper is performed, during which the Gospel is read in many languages.



Saitopolemos

A distinct local custom that takes place in the city's Historic Center every Easter Sunday. The participants – often wearing traditional costumes – light up the saites constructed by themselves, while dancing the "zebekiko fire dance".

The horseraces at Platy

It is an important local custom that dates back to the late Byzantine years and takes place every year in the village's hippodrome in order to commemorate Saint George, the protector of horsemen. The starting point is the Saint's country church.

The flower fair

It takes place at the end of May. Flowers, plants, equipment and other supplies are being showcased here. Parallel events are organized during the fair: learning activities, art and folklore happenings, scientific presentations, support and consultancy on urban farming issues.

International Dance Festival

An international event of great prestige (already more than two decades old) that takes place every July. Very important artists have made here their debut in Greece.

The festival is also an opportunity to showcase and promote Greek creators. Educational dance seminars, workshops and lectures for students and professionals are all an integral part of the festival.



Farm fair “Artos-Oinos-Elaion”

It takes place at the end of August in the Municipal Railway Park. It is organized by the Kalamata Municipality in order to present and promote top-quality agricultural and local products as well as folk culture.



Fests for promoting local products

Fests organized in Local Communities during the summer months: the Artichoke Fest (Mikromani), the Potato Fest (Alagonia), the Olive Oil Fest (Mikri Mantineia), the Wine Fest (Ladas) and the Rice Fest (Sperchogeia).

White Night

It takes place on the last Saturday of August along with great sales offered by the shops, and plenty of cultural activities. A similar event called “Red Night” takes place after the end of the winter sales.

International Choir Festival



It is organized every two years by the Municipality of Kalamata and Interkultur. Many choirs from different countries of the world are participating, ‘flooding’ the city with young voices.

Christmas

Bright celebrations that involve the lighting of christmas trees and boats, recreational cultural activities and charity events.

Sports activities

Many international competitions take place in Kalamata (the Rhythmic Gymnastics Cup, the Papflesseia meeting of athletics, free diving competitions, hang-gliding meetings). The Messinian Gulf is the ideal setting for water sports, such as swimming, sailing, canoeing and jet-skiing.



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