



RIDE WORLD WIDE

Greece 2018

Ride Information Sheet

These rides explore the Pelion peninsula, an unspoilt corner of Greece that juts out into the Aegean Sea on the east coast. In mythology, perhaps because of its lush vegetation and thick, impenetrable forests, the area was home to the Centaur and with its tiny secluded bays, winding cobbled tracks that lead to remote whitewashed cottages, groves of gnarled olive trees and shady forests of pine and chestnut, it is picturesque, forgotten riding country. Village squares shaded by huge plane trees harbour hospitable little tavernas and nights are spent in comfortable guesthouses and village hotels. Your host and guide, Eric, is French but has been based in Greece for over 40 years. He speaks fluent English (and Greek), is professional, charming and very knowledgeable about the local area. The Katigiorgis Ride is a combination of riding and bathing excursions with each night at the same comfortable hotel in Katigiorgis - ideal for those looking for a relaxing holiday in an authentic and unspoilt area. The rides are based from Hippocampus Farm, home of the Company of the Horse of Thessaly and you will ride through sleepy, traditional villages with wonderful views of the rocky coastline and startlingly blue Aegean Sea.



Dates Katigiorgis Rides are available on request any week from April to October (excepting between 11th and 25th August). Itineraries are usually for 7 nights but there is some flexibility and shorter or longer stays are possible. Please call us to discuss dates and check availability.

The Horses The horses used are all bred on the farm. They are pure bred Thessalian, and some crossbred with a lineage of large Arab horses. They range from around 15 to 16 hands, are forward going and fun to ride, sturdy and sure footed. There are currently 12 horses at the farm including brood mares, stallions and a gelding. Saddles are English style and hackamore bridles are usually used.



Riding The itinerary for the Katigiorgis Ride is quite flexible. There is usually riding on 6 days and between 15 and 20 hours riding in all, but this can be adjusted to suit. The going is often rough and sometimes steep, riders must be prepared to dismount and lead the horses in places. There is usually no more than about 10 minutes walking at a time. Rides are at a leisurely pace and provide wonderful opportunities to admire the tremendous views! Groups are usually limited to a maximum of 6, and are generally run for a minimum of 2 riders. There is a weight limit of 14 stone 2lbs (90 kgs) - please call to discuss if you are close to this. Riders are welcome to help groom and to tack up and untack their own horse each day although there is always assistance if required. Some saddle bags are provided, shared amongst the group, for carrying personal items, sun cream etc on the longer day rides.

Pace The overall pace of the riding is quite slow, mostly at a walk and trot, with a few places to canter. The terrain is quite rough and rugged, sometimes on ancient cobbled paths, so there are only a few opportunities to ride fast.

Riding Experience The Katigiorgis Ride is, as mentioned above, quite flexible and there is always time to get used to your horse in the arena before riding out. The riding can be adapted to suit, so the itinerary works very well for families and groups of mixed abilities. The horses are well schooled and sensible, but are also responsive, and an enjoyable ride for all levels. If you do not ride regularly at home we recommend you accustom yourself to the hours spent in the saddle with regular training before you go.



Terrain The Pelion peninsula is well away from the tourist traps of the Greek islands and offers a good variety of unspoilt scenery. The craggy Aegean coast hides some lovely secluded beaches and coves and traditional villages with their narrow cobbled streets are perched on the hillsides above the rocky coastline. Away from the coast, narrow paths wind upwards through olive covered slopes and apple orchards and into forests of shady pine and chestnut, eventually reaching the isolated villages that cling to the wooded mountainsides. Often these winding donkey trails and narrow dirt or cobbled tracks are the quickest route between the villages and you are likely to meet local people who also use them, perhaps with donkeys loaded with wood or baskets of olives or fruit.

Accommodation Accommodation is in the village of Katigiorgis, usually at Avra Studios. The hotel is situated on the edge of the village, overlooking the sea and harbour. It has a swimming pool and lovely views across the bay and towards the island of Skiathos. Bedrooms are twin bedded, with private bathroom and a balcony with a view on to the sea. The village, where there are a few tavernas, shops and its sandy bay, is close by. As well as Katigiorgis beach, one can head to the nearby beaches of Theotokos, Liri, Moutrias and Liri. The popular beach of Agios Konstantinos in the village of Paltsi is only a 15km drive from here. Rates assume shared twin rooms and if you are travelling alone then a supplement is payable.



Meals The food is typical of the area: hearty and simple, yet delicious. Breakfast, which is eaten in your hotel or at the café on the harbour front, will generally include eggs, Greek yogurt, bread, butter and jam with coffee, tea and fruit juices. Lunches are usually in a village taverna and may consist of vegetarian pies, perhaps meatballs, salads, various dips, cheeses, and also seafood such as octopus or squid. Occasionally you may stop in a shady place for a picnic of freshly baked bread and a selection of locally made cheeses, salami, ham, salad, delicious local olives. Dinner will be in one of the local tavernas or small local restaurants where there will be a selection of Greek hors d'oeuvres to choose from as well as a choice of local meat dishes, grilled fish, vegetables or Greek salads. Wine, beer and soft drinks are not included with meals but are readily available to purchase in the restaurants and bars.



Weather Rides can be run from late spring to early autumn, excepting mid July to end of August. In April, May, early June, September and early October it is generally very pleasant with daytime temperatures varying from about 15°C to 30°C, and evening temperatures dropping to a cooler 7°C to 13°C (7°C would be a cold night at the highest point on the Pelion Coast Ride for the first or last ride of the season). Summer months can be hot (mid July to end of August is not usually possible) but the flexible programme means the riding hours and timetable can be altered accordingly and there is often a cool sea breeze as well as opportunities to swim to cool off. As the Pelion Peninsula is bathed in a Mediterranean climate, there is very little rainfall during these months (less than 5mm/month) with winter rains generally arriving in late October.

What to bring We will send you a list of things we suggest you bring when you make your booking.

Itinerary The following is an example of the **Katigiorgis Ride**, although **please note** that it is only an example. The itinerary is flexible and is a combination of rides out from the base and short lessons in the arena if required. It can be tailored to suit, full non-riding days can be included if you wish and each day's activity may be varied. Day to day arrangements are subject to change by your guide in his complete discretion if the weather or other local conditions require.

Day 1 You will be met in Athens, Volos or Skiathos airport and transferred to the small town of Katigiorgis at the southern end of the Pelion peninsula. Dinner at a taverna on the beach at Katigiorgis and overnight in a hotel in Katigiorgis. (D)

Day 2 Breakfast then enjoy the beach and meet the horses. After lunch a short ride or lesson in the arena to get used to your horse, then an afternoon hack into the hills, returning to Katigiorgis for dinner in a small taverna on the harbour wall and the night. (B,L,D)

Day 3 Ride to the beach and (weather allowing) a chance to swim with your horse (which they love) in the calm waters of the Aegean which are often clear turquoise right through to the bottom. In the afternoon an optional lesson in the arena and perhaps a short ride back to the pasture. Dinner and the night in Katigiorgis. (B,L,D)

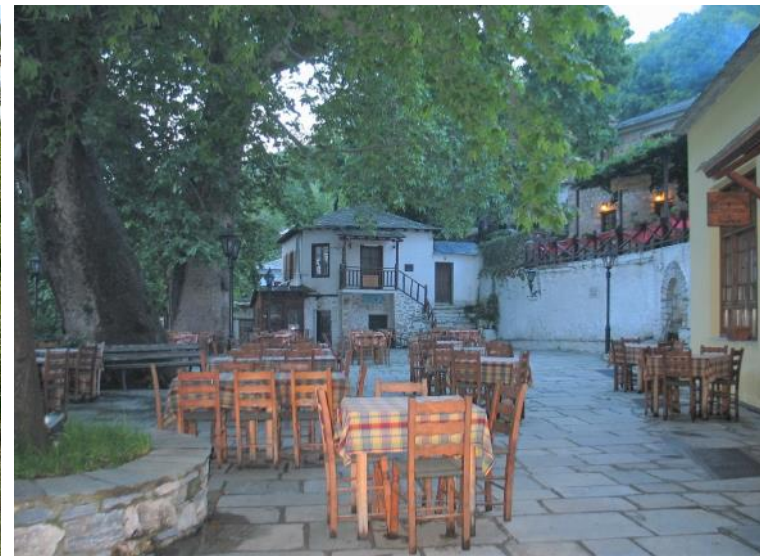


Day 4 An excursion on horseback to Platania, a small town to the south or to Paltsi which is to the north. Lunch at a taverna returning to Katigiorgis for dinner and the night. (B,L,D)

Day 5 Breakfast and either a lesson in the arena, or a hack out. The afternoon is free to relax on the beach or perhaps an excursion by car to visit one of the neighbouring villages. Dinner and night in Katigiorgis. (B,L,D)

Day 6 After breakfast set off riding up into the hills to the traditional village of Promiri. Stop for lunch at a taverna on the main square, in the shade of a giant plane tree. In the afternoon ride back to Katigiorgis by a different route. Dinner and night in Katigiorgis. (B,L,D)

Day 7 Perhaps ride to the beach with a chance for a swim and then a simple picnic lunch. In the afternoon return to Katigiorgis for a farewell dinner at a taverna on the beach and the night. (B,L,D)



Day 8 An early breakfast and transfer to Athens, Volos or Skiathos. (B)



2018 Dates

Katigiorgis Rides

Saturday to Saturday from 7th April to 11th August & 25th August to 21st October

Please enquire

2018 Rates

Please note that due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, ride rates are now quoted in euros. The sterling price will be the equivalent sterling rate using the euro/sterling exchange rate in force when you book/pay.

Katigiorgis Ride, 7 nights - Euros 1115 per person

(single supplement - Euro 120, payable locally in cash)

Non-riders - Euros 810 per person

Children under 16 - 10% discount

Rates quoted are based on a minimum of 2 participants.

NB Prices for shorter stays on request.

Rates **INCLUDE** all riding, guiding and equipment, 7 nights twin hotel / guesthouse accommodation (single room if paying supplement), meals (dinner Day 1 to breakfast Day 8) and also transfers from / to Skiathos airport or Volos at set times on Day 1 / Day 8.

Rates **EXCLUDE** flights / travel to Skiathos / Volos, transfers outside the set times, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), any visa fees, all drinks, personal extras such as telephone calls etc and any tips you wish to leave.

Note: Add approximately 130 euros per person for return transfers from / to Athens airport, payable in cash locally.

Single supplement Rates assume twin bedded rooms in the hotel and the single supplement is payable if you are travelling alone, or wish to book a single room. If you are travelling alone and are prepared to share with another (same sex) guest on the ride to save paying the supplement, we can sometimes arrange this - let us know and we will see if we can find a sharer - if there is no-one, the supplement will be charged.



Travel There are several travel options for this ride. The most regular flights are to Athens and we can arrange meeting here (usually at 14.00 on the first day) and transfer by taxi to Volos. Here you will be met by your guide / one of the Hippocampus team and driven to Katigiorgis. The transfer from Athens to Volos is about 3 to 4 hours and there is an extra charge of 65 Euros each way per person for this service.

There are direct flights to Athens with a number of different airlines from many different UK airports and if you book early there are some good deals on offer with low cost airlines such as Easy Jet (www.easjet.com) as well as with British Airways (www.britishairways.com) and Olympic Airlines (www.olympicair.com).

Meeting can also be arranged from Volos (usually at 17.30 on the first day), about 1 ½ hour drive from Katigiorgis. Flights to Volos are usually charter flights, not scheduled.

Another option is to fly to Skiathos - we can arrange for you to be met on arrival and taken by car and boat to Katigiorgis on the Pelion peninsula (about an hour in all). Several charter companies fly direct from the UK to Skiathos, with most services on Fridays (try www.thompson.co.uk). Fares are from about £250 return and, depending on time of year, there are usually options from Gatwick, Birmingham and Manchester.

Athens / Volos meetings are preferable earlier (April, May) and later (after mid September) in the season when the boat crossing from Skiathos is not always possible.

If you plan to visit other areas then we suggest hiring a car in Athens and driving yourselves to Pelion. This gives you more flexibility during your stay - we can supply directions to Katigiorgis and can also book extra nights for you at the hotel in Katigiorgis if required.

Please call us for more information or if you would like help booking flights.

General Visa and Health information (NB this is a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking)

Visas Holders of full UK passports do not need visas for visits to Greece whatever the length of stay, although for visits of over 90 days residence permits are required. Visa information is available on the Greek Embassy website: www.greekembassy.org.uk

Health No vaccinations are needed by EEC residents to enter Greece (according to the Greek and World Health Organisations), however it is always advisable to ensure your tetanus inoculation is up to date. If you have a particular condition requiring special medical treatment, in case of emergencies you should carry a letter from your own doctor translated into Greek describing your condition and the medicine / treatment required. You should in any case consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice.

(DRAFT 07/11/17)

