



The Most Exceptional Travel Spots

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Zagoria

Green Haven

If you are looking for real peace and quiet, the region of Zagoria is the place to be. This forgotten, rugged part of Greece that is today a nature reserve remains largely undiscovered by tourists, yet it is home to stunning natural and cultural sites including the oldest oracle in Greece.

We stayed in Dilofo, a sleepy village with just a couple of houses, a quaint square with a tree in the middle, no shops and only seven permanent inhabitants. The only hotel in the village is Archontiko Dilofo, a beautifully restored manor house that forms the perfect base from which to explore this untouched corner of the country.

Our first stop was the Vikos Gorge, a 900-metre deep canyon where wild bears still roam. The trails leading to the gorge were slightly confusing, but after about half an hour we came to the edge of the gorge, an impressive plunging gap in the landscape with beautiful views all around. In the village of Kipi, the stone bridges are a testimony to the sophistication of the ancient civilisations that flourished here. The village itself has just six houses, but nearly as many stone bridges that date back several thousand years. Despite their venerable old age, they are still in perfect condition and are used on a daily basis.

Further to the south, the Oracle of Dodoni is more than 4,000 years old. In its time, it was the most popular sanctuary after the Oracle of Delphi. The pre-Greek inhabitants of the area worshipped Mother Earth, who was embodied by a holy oak. The tree was surrounded by bronze kettles that were suspended in such a way that they touched each other and rattled in the wind. Prophecies were made by listening to the rattling of the kettles in combination with the rustling of the oak leaves and the cooing of the black doves that nested in the branches above. While the holy oak of Dodoni disappeared long ago, we were still able to visit the remains of the Dodona theatre and guess at the many rituals that took place here millennia ago.

