

Most coaches drive **through** Arcadia. Almost none stop.

Between Nafplio and Olympia, between Athens and Mystras, there is a mountain region the classical circuits cross at speed: stone villages at a thousand metres, a gorge full of monasteries, Greece's first UNESCO monument, and the vineyards of Mantinia. This file is for the product manager deciding whether it is worth a night.



Dimitsana, on the rim of the Lousios gorge. Roughly two hours from Athens, one from Nafplio.

THE REGION

Arcadia in one page

Arcadia is the largest region of the Peloponnese and the only one that is not defined by its coast — it is the mountainous interior, capital Tripoli, running from the fir forests of Mount Mainalo down to a short, steep shore on the Argolic Gulf. It is the Arcadia of the pastoral idyll, the word that entered every European language as a synonym for unspoiled country. What survives on the ground is closer to the myth than most places that trade on one: villages of grey stone and slate that were never rebuilt in concrete, because the people who left in the twentieth century never came back to rebuild them.

It is not an island destination and does not behave like one. It has no airport, no resort strip and no season of its own. It has depth, half a day's drive from four of the biggest names in Greek tourism, and almost no international bed nights.

LOCATION	Central Peloponnese, southern Greece
GATEWAY	Athens (ATH) via the A7 motorway; Kalamata (KLX) for the south
TERRAIN	Mountain and upland, 600–1,900 m, plus a coastline in Kynouria
ACCOMMODATION	Family-run guesthouses and small hotels, typically 6–20 rooms
GROUP SIZE	Best served at 8–16; a 40-seat coach will struggle on village roads
CONTRACTING	One contact for the whole region, through the network

You already pass it

The case for Arcadia is not that your clients should build a trip around it — most will not. It is that a region they currently cross in ninety minutes can absorb one or two nights without adding a single day to the itinerary, and change the texture of the whole programme when it does. A Peloponnese circuit that sleeps in Nafplio, then Olympia, then Kalamata, is a circuit of car parks. One night in a mountain village between them is the night clients describe when they get home.

Indicative driving times to central Arcadia. Mountain roads are good but slow; allow more than the map suggests.

FROM	TO TRIPOLI	TO DIMITSANA & STEMNITSA
Athens city	2 h 00	3 h 00
Athens airport	2 h 30	3 h 30
Nafplio	1 h 00	2 h 00
Olympia	2 h 00	1 h 45
Mystras / Sparta	1 h 00	2 h 00
Kalamata	1 h 15	1 h 45
Patras	2 h 15	2 h 00

The insertion costs you no days. It only costs you the decision to stop.

WHAT IS THERE

Four pillars

The network files everything it holds — a guesthouse, a walking stage, a producer, a guide — under four headings. It is also the quickest way to phrase a request to us.



STAY

A quiet escape where every detail invites deep rest.



HIKE

Stroll the [Arcadia trails](#) and let the landscape calm your soul.



TASTE

Savor the true essence of Arcadia's finest flavors.



EXPLORE

Create lasting memories through authentic local adventures.



What a client wakes up to: a guesthouse balcony in Dimitsana.

STAY Where clients sleep

Restored stone guesthouses in eleven villages: **Dimitsana**, **Stemnitsa**, **Ellinikó** and **Karytaina** in the Gortynia highlands above the Lousios gorge; **Vytina**, **Piana** and **Alonistaina** in the fir forest of Mount Mainalo; **Skopí** on the Tripoli plateau; **Leontari** in the Megalopoli basin; and **Ágios Ioánnis** and **Kosmás** high on Mount Parnon, on the eastern side of the region. Mostly family-owned and family-run, mostly under twenty rooms, several with fireplaces that start to matter from October onwards. Standards vary the way small independent properties always vary; the network exists partly to tell you which is which, and we will say so plainly rather than sell you a bed that generates a complaint.

The spread matters more than the count. Three separate mountain areas — Mainalo and the Gortynian gorge country, the Megalopoli basin, and Parnon — mean a programme can cross Arcadia sleeping in a different landscape each night, without long transfers between them. And where one house is too small, two neighbouring villages are not: parties are routinely split across houses within walking distance and dined together.



The springs at Piana, on Mount Mainalo — one of our member villages.

HIKE Walking, on real infrastructure

The **Menalon Trail** is the anchor: a waymarked long-distance route through the Lousios gorge and the Mainalo villages, and the first trail in Greece certified a *Leading Quality Trail — Best of Europe* by the European Ramblers Association. It is walked in stages between villages with luggage transfer, which makes it a genuine self-guided product rather than a day walk dressed up as one.

It also works in small doses. A single signed stage — the gorge beneath the monasteries, an hour and a half — is the occasional walk that fits a cultural coach programme without turning it into a walking tour. Two further routes, on Mount Parnon and towards Mount Lykaion, are in development under our *Arcadia Trails* banner, and operators who come in early are invited into their design. The Parnon route is not starting from nothing: we already have member houses at Ágios Ioánnis and Kosmás, on the mountain itself.



A village taverna table — the format most of our tasting programmes take.

TASTE Food and wine as programme, not filler

Mantinia PDO is the wine appellation — Moschofilero, a rose-skinned grape making an aromatic white that surprises people who think they know Greek wine. The vineyards are twenty minutes from Tripoli and set up to receive visitors.

Around it: **Pilafa Tripoleos PDO apples**, fir honey from Mainalo, chestnuts and walnuts from the mountains above Megalopoli, the garlic of Lithovouni, sheep and goat cheeses from village dairies, and the **Tsakonian aubergine PDO** of Leonidio, which grows nowhere else. Our *Arcadian Breakfast* project puts this on the guesthouse table at eight in the morning in place of an industrial buffet — for many clients it is the single most photographed thing in the trip.



Prodromos monastery, built into the cliff of the Lousios gorge.

EXPLORE Heritage, and the rest of the day

The **Temple of Apollo Epikourios at Bassae** stands high in the Arcadian mountains and was the first monument in Greece inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list, in 1986. Ancient **Mantineia**, **Tegea** with its museum of the Temple of Athena Alea, **Lykosoura** — which Pausanias called the oldest city in the world — and the vast theatre of **Megalopoli** are all within an hour of each other.

Alongside them, the things clients do not expect: the monasteries built into the cliff face of the Lousios gorge; the open-air Water Power Museum at Dimitsana, which explains how these villages made the gunpowder for the revolution; the Frankish castle at Karytaina; the silversmithing tradition of Stemnitsa; and, at Leonidio on the coast, one of Europe's fastest-growing sport-climbing areas, in a town that still speaks Tsakonian, the last living descendant of ancient Doric Greek.



The season that sells itself is not August.

SEASONALITY

When it works – and it is not July

Arcadia's calendar is the inverse of the islands', which is precisely its commercial value: it fills the months your Greek product currently cannot.

APR – JUN Prime Wildflowers, full rivers, walking at its best. Warm days, cold nights at altitude.	JUL – AUG Workable Hot, but markedly cooler than the coast, and the gorges stay shaded. Escape value for clients already in Greece.	SEP – OCT Prime The best of the year. Harvest in the vineyards, chestnuts, stable weather, empty trails.
NOV – MAR Open A genuine winter destination: fireplaces, snow on Mainalo, a small ski centre. Greeks come; foreigners have not found it.		

One door to the whole region

Arcadia Hospitality Network is a non-profit organisation. We do not sell tours and we are not competing with you. We were founded because an operator wanting to build an Arcadian week previously had to find and negotiate with fifteen small businesses that had never heard of each other. Now there is one address.

- **A single contact for the region.** Availability, capacity and pricing across member guesthouses, producers, wineries and activity providers, answered by one person rather than fifteen inboxes.
- **Itinerary building on request.** Send us the shape of the programme you need – nights, group size, walking appetite, budget band – and we will come back with a routed draft and the properties that can actually take it.
- **Familiarisation visits.** Tell us the window and we will build the ground programme for your product managers or for travel media.
- **Tastings and producer visits** that are visits, not shops: the vineyard, the dairy, the apple orchard, the beekeeper.
- **Co-design on the new trails.** The Parnon and Lykaion routes are being planned now. Operators who engage early get their requirements – stage lengths, luggage points, bed capacity – built in rather than retrofitted.
- **A current member list** with contacts, capacities and photography, on request.

BEFORE YOU ASK

What Arcadia is not

It is more useful to you if we are straight about the limits, so that nothing surprises you at the contracting stage.

- There is no airport in the region and no rail service worth programming. Everything arrives by road.
- Large coaches cannot reach several of the best villages. Above roughly thirty seats, plan on a transfer.
- Bed capacity in any single village is limited. Large groups are handled by splitting, and that needs booking early.
- It is not a beach destination. There is a coast, and it is beautiful, but nobody should sell Arcadia on it.
- Some member businesses close for part of the winter. We will tell you which before you publish, not after.

Elias P. Siolis

Founding member · Authorised representative

Arcadia Hospitality Network · Our Arcadia, Our Hospitality

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Arcadia Hospitality Network is a non-profit civil-law company registered in Greece, uniting guesthouses, producers, wineries and outdoor-activity professionals of Arcadia. Driving times in this file are indicative and should be verified for a specific routing. Written for the travel trade — please ask for anything that is missing.