

2019



Study of integrated methodology for cultural, natural sites and traditional gastronomy in Evros

Deliverable: D3.2.1

Partner: DIMOSSINETERISTIKI EVROS SA

Contractor: GNOSI DEVELOPMENT CONSULTING P.C.

This document was created in the framework of the project "Promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage of Bulgarian – Greek cross-border region through smart and digital tools" (e-TOURIST), funded by the European Territorial Cooperation Program "INTERREG VA Greece - Bulgaria 2014-2020», Grant Agreement B2.6c.07 / 09.10.2017. The project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the national resources of the countries participating in the European Territorial Cooperation Program "INTERREG V-A Greece - Bulgaria 2014-2020".

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	5
2. Brief presentation of Evros Regional Unit.....	6
3. Methodology	8
4. Existing natural and cultural sites of Evros Regional Unit	10
4.1 Environmental resources.....	10
4.2 Cultural resources	11
4.3 Opportunities for developing alternative forms of tourism.....	28
5. Analysis and evaluation of accessibility and visiting rate to the sites of interest.....	35
5.1 Accessibility.....	35
5.2 Accommodation infrastructure	36
5.3 Healthcare infrastructure.....	37
5.4 Telecommunications infrastructure	38
5.5 Tourist visits.....	38
5.5.1 Forest of Dadia.....	38
5.5.2 Delta of Evros River.....	44
5.5.3 Tourist Visits to the area based on arrivals and overnight stays.....	48
5.5.4 Tourist visits in archaeological sites and museums	51
6. Analysis and Evaluation of Points of Interest - Presentation of the identity of Points of Interest and their Historical Significance	56
7. Presentation of the traditional cuisine and analysis and evaluation of traditional culinary resources in Evros.....	61
7.1 Food.....	61
7.2 Sweets.....	65
7.3 Traditional cuisine of Samothraki island	69
7.4 Other local food products.....	75
7.5 Women's cooperatives of Evros	76
Bibliography	78
Annexes.....	81

Annex I. Main environmental and cultural resources in the Regional Unit of Evros	81
Annex II. Most Important Tourist Infrastructure and Alternative Tourism Activities in the Regional Unit of Evros	81
Annex III. Application form for cultural bodies	81

List of Pictures

Picture 1. Political map of Evros Regional Unit	6
Picture 2. Panagia Kosmosotira (external view)	12
Picture 3. Panagia Kosmosotira (internal view)	12
Picture 4. Double Tower in Pythio.....	13
Picture 5. Ancient Mesimvria.....	15
Picture 6. Ancient Mesimvria– The building with amphorae	16
Picture 7. Tekke of Roussa	18
Picture 8. Mulberry tree of 600 years old at Tekke of Roussa.....	18
Picture 9. Megalithic Tombs (Dolmen) of Roussa	19
Picture 10. Rock carvings of Roussa	20
Picture 11. Forest of Dadia	21
Picture 12. Aerial view of the Evros river Delta	21
Picture 13. The ancient cemetery of Doxipara– Horse & carriage burials	22
Picture 14. The ancient cemetery of Doxipara – Grave gifts	23
Picture 15. Vajazit Mosque	24
Picture 16. Vajazit Mosque	25
Picture 17. Didymoteicho Folklore Museum	26
Picture 18. The Bridge Gate (Kalioporta) at Didymoteicho Castle	27
Picture 19. Plotinopolis.....	27
Picture 20. Boating in the Delta of Evros river.....	29
Picture 21. Black vulture (Aegyptius monachus) at the forest of Dadia.....	29
Picture 22. Information Center of Dadia forest	30
Picture 23. Monastery of Kornofolia.....	31
Picture 24. Thermal Baths of Traianoupolis.....	32

Picture 25. Thermal Baths of Traianoupolis.....	32
Picture 26. Thermal Baths of Samothraki	33
Picture 27. Road network of the Regional Unit of Evros	35
Picture 28. Egyptian vulture or Black vulture at the Forest of Dadia	39
Picture 29. White-tailed eagle (Haliaeetus albicilla) at the Forest of Dadia.....	40
Picture 30. Map of the paths in Dadia Forest	41
Picture 31. Map of special roads routes in the forest of Dadia	43
Picture 32. Fossilized forest of Lefkimi- Filakto	44
Picture 33. Sunset in Delta of Evros river	45
Picture 34. White-tailed eagle (Haliaeetus albicilla) in Delta of Evros river	46
Picture 35. Historical Museum of Alexandroupolis (external view).....	51
Picture 36. Historical Museum of Alexandroupolis (internal view)	52
Picture 37. Byzantine Museum of Didymoteicho (internal view).....	52
Picture 38. Byzantine Museum of Didymoteicho (internal view).....	53
Picture 39. Military Museum of Didymoteicho (internal view)	53
Picture 39. Military Museum of Didymoteicho.....	54
Picture 40. Silk Art Museum of Soufli.....	54
Picture 42. Hiking route to Moon mountain in Samothraki	58
Picture 43. Fonias waterfall	59

List of Tables

Table 1. Capacity of hotel and Tourist campsites in 2017	37
Table 2. Tourist accommodation facilities in 2017	37
Table 3. Arrival to tourist accommodation facilities (excluding campsites), by Regional Unit and Municipality, in 2017	48
Table 4. Overnight stays at tourist accommodation facilities (excluding campsites), by Regional Unit and Municipality, in 2017.....	48
Table 5. Tourist arrivals to hotel accommodation facilities (excluding campsites), by Regional Unit and Municipality 2014-2017	49

Table 6. Overnight stays at hotel accommodation facilities (excluding campsites), by Regional Unit and Municipality, 2014-2017	50
Table 7. Occupancy rate of hotel accommodation facilities 2017	50
Table 8. Occupancy rate of hotel accommodation facilities (excluding campsites), by Regional Unit and Municipality	51
Table 9. Tourist visits to museums and archaeological sites of the Regional Unit of Evros.....	55

1. INTRODUCTION

The present deliverable: «Study of integrated methodology for cultural, natural sites and traditional gastronomy in Evros» (Deliverable 3.2.1) was prepared by GNOSI DEVELOPMENT CONSULTING P.C, according to specific contract with the Contracting Authority: DIMOSSINETERISTIKI EVROS SA, in the framework of the project "Promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage of Bulgarian – Greek cross-border region through smart and digital tools" (acronym" eTOURIST").

The eTOURIST project is implemented in the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation Program "INTERREG VA Greece - Bulgaria 2014-2020" under *"Priority Axis 2- A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area"*, thematic objective *"6-Preserving and Protecting the Environment and Promoting resource efficiency"*, investment priority *"6c: Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage"*, special subject *"4. Valorize CB area cultural and natural heritage for tourist purposes"*, co-financed by the European Union - European Regional Development Fund (85%) and National Resources (15%).

The aim of the eTOURIST project is to promote and develop cultural and natural heritage, gastronomy, including winemaking, in Evros and Haskovo for tourism purposes. The objective of the project includes the recording of cultural and natural heritage sites- mainly for tourist purposes-, traditional culinary and wines, including traditional recipes, as well as the development of software with all the above information but also texts, photographs, tourist routes, etc.

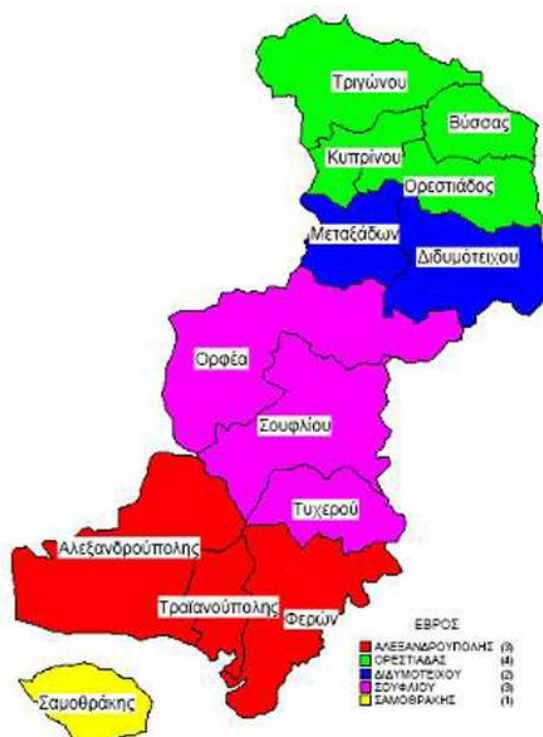
The purpose of the present study is to record and present the cultural and natural resources as well as the traditional gastronomy of the Evros region, as elements of local cultural heritage that can be exploited for touristic purposes.

2. Brief presentation of Evros Regional Unit

The Regional Unit of Evros is located on the northeast corner of Greece and especially on the country's natural border with Bulgaria in north and with Turkey in east. It is one of the three tri-national places in Greece. It is the natural border of Greece with Turkey and Bulgaria, bordered by the Regional Unit of Rodopi in west and by the Thracian Sea in south. Undoubtedly the geographical location of Evros is considered as an advantage that can help in the stimulation of the local economy, trade and tourism. It was named Evros by the local river, which is the largest in the Balkans and crosses the northeast corner of Greece.

The Regional Unit of Evros is one of the five regional units of the Eastern Macedonia and Thrace region. In addition, Samothrace island is included in its administrative boundaries. The Regional Unit of Evros comprises 5 municipalities: Municipality of Alexandroupolis, Municipality of Orestiada, Municipality of Didymoteicho, Municipality of Soufli and Municipality of Samothraki. The capital of Evros is Alexandroupolis (72,750 inhabitants), which is the most important administrative, financial and commercial center of the region and at the same time the only port of Thrace.

Picture 1. Political map of Evros Regional Unit



Evros has a total area of 4,242 Km², and a population of 147,947 inhabitants, according to 2011 census data. It is the most remote Regional Unit of Greece, as Alexandroupolis (capital) is 840 km away from Athens, 340 km away from Thessaloniki, 295 km away from Istanbul and 60 km away from Komotini, where the headquarters of eastern Macedonia – Thrace are located.

Evros is a lowland area, with only 10.3% of mountainous places, compared to the extensive plains that occupy the 62.4% of its total area, the majority of which are cultivated. The existence of the river Evros, along with its tributaries and numerous irrigation canals contribute to the cultivation

3. Methodology

For the preparation of the present study, the methodological approach followed by the project team was based on:

- ❖ **Bibliographic overview** of information sources and related documents, such as studies and articles about tourism promotion of the Regional Unit of Evros and tourism development texts from organizations (e.g. local government, DIMOSSINETERISTIKI EVROS SA, etc.) while information was also obtained from the Hellenic Statistical Authority on the archaeological site visits and the existing tourist accommodation infrastructure.
- ❖ **Field research in museums and cultural institutions** of the Regional Unit of Evros, in order to collect information that will contribute to a more complete picture of the current state of cultural infrastructure, attractions and monuments of tourist interest in the region.
- ❖ **Analysis of aggregated information**
- ❖ **Presentation of information** by category, based on the sub-funds and the structure of the deliverables
- ❖ **Comment on information**

Specifically, the project team, focusing on the bibliographic review, implemented a series of actions in order to obtain the required information and to evaluate them, regarding the objectives of the deliverable.

In particular, in order to systematically and fully reflect the cultural and natural sites in the Regional Unit of Evros, the project team took the following actions:

- Development of database containing all existing natural and cultural sites of the Evros, classified by categories such as archaeological sites, traditional settlements, architectural sites, folklore sites, gastronomic traditions, Protected Areas, etc.
- Analysis and evaluation of accessibility and percentage of traffic to points of interest.
- Collection of information about points of interest, in order to present their identity and highlight their historical significance.
- Collection of information about the traditional cuisine of the Regional Unit of Evros.
- Analysis and evaluation of the traditional gastronomic resources of the Regional Unit of Evros, on the basis of "the importance of preserving the gastronomic heritage of the region".

Regarding the methodology of the field research, it is worth mentioned that, the project team designed a specific questionnaire, which is presented in Annex III, which was send (by e-mail) to all museums and cultural institutions located in the area and follow-up telephone calls were made in order to invite respondents of the questionnaire to participate in the survey.

4. Existing natural and cultural sites of Evros Regional Unit

4.1 Environmental resources

The Regional Unit of Evros has rich environmental resources with natural sites of rare ecological value and beauty. The diversity of flora and fauna of the region gives it a strong competitive advantage in tourism development. Both the coastal and the inland region have beautiful landscapes. Therefore, there are all the prerequisites, in terms of natural wealth for the development of alternative tourism. Highly important ecosystems, forest complexes and mountain streams, wetlands, lakes and river deltas, with a rare variety of animals and birds compose a unique setting suitable for eco-tours. The issue that arises is the utilization of this capital as an integral part of a growing thematic tourism destination.

An important part of the natural resources of the Regional Unit of Evros are protected, either as sites of Community Importance (SCIs) or as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) of the Natura 2000 European Network:

- Dadia Forest
- Three Fountains of Samothrace Moon,
- East Coast, Zurafa Island and Maritime Zone
- Mountains of Evros
- Delta of Evros river
- Delta of Evros river and Western coast
- Riverside of North Evros and Arda River
- Southern Evros Forest Cluster,

There are also wetlands of international importance protected by the Ramsar Treaty, as well as aesthetic forests, wildlife sanctuaries and national parks. In recent years, management bodies have taken over the protection of these areas locally (AMTH, 2015).

The exploitation of the above natural sites and their effective promotion require know-how and taking all the necessary actions so as not to disturb the physical balance of them.

In addition, it has to be mentioned that there are several infrastructures that support eco / environmental tourism, such as information centers, ecotourism units, wildlife and bird watches, and there are opportunities for sightseeing and eco-tours.

4.2 Cultural resources

Cultural heritage is also important in the Eastern Macedonia and Thrace region, as there are multitude of monuments of archaeological importance, from Roman, Byzantine and modern history. Given that cultural sites are part of the country's brand name based on the triptych, "sun, sea, culture", it is understood that this is an important parameter which could be a criterion for choosing this tourist destination. There is great potential of exploiting these sites by the development of alternative of tourism, such as cultural, archaeological, touristic, etc., which can add value to the regional tourism product.

Last but not least, the region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace has a multitude of folk-cultural events which are attractions for visitors each year.

Especially, the Regional Unit of Evros has unique geomorphological and climatic conditions as well as rich cultural tradition. As a result, it has important elements that can contribute to increase its popularity as a touristic destination, by promoting its natural environment as the most significant advantage.

In **Annex I** are presented the main environmental and cultural resources (archaeological sites, monuments, cultural events, museums, etc.) of the Regional Unit of Evros.

In summary, the most important sights of the Regional Unit of Evros are the following:

↪ The Church of Panagia Kosmosotira

Theotokos Kosmosotira is a monastery founded by Emperor Isaac Komnenos on Vira place (today's Feres, Evros), located near the Delta of Evros river. The most probable year of its establishment is 1152. Isaac, the eldest son of Alexios I the ambitious ambassador, was engaged in a constant struggle for power, with a strong background.

In the middle of the 12th century and when he was already 59 years old, weak and repentant for his former life, he renounced his political ambitions and became a priest. He founded Vira, a monastery dedicated to Theotokos Panagia Kosmosotira. He offered all his property to the monastery, thus making it particularly prosperous and financially autonomous.

The most significant religious art works that are preserved until today, are those that are placed in the center of the temple. These are unnamed art works of the four military saints, identified with faces of the Komnenian family, including the conqueror. The glittering marble of the floor, the columns, the "eikonostasi" and the gold plating illuminate the interior of the temple, along with the multitude of windows.

The monastery, which operated until the middle of the 14th century, is considered as one of the best examples of Konstantinopolis art in Greece. Around 1355 AD the villagers who were permanently settled in the monastery, forcing the monks to abandon it. It was later

occupied by the Ottomans, who converted its cathedral into a mosque, which became the core of Feres. In 1940 began the maintenance works and since then has operated as a Christian temple. In recent years, it has been the official headquarters of the World Thracian Association.

Picture 2. Panagia Kosmosotira (external view)



Source: Project team

Picture 3. Panagia Kosmosotira (internal view)



Source: <https://www.visitthraci.gr>

↪ Double Tower in Pythio

It is a 14th-century fortification located in a low-lying mountain of eastern Rhodope and in front of the Evros River valley. It is considered as a brilliant example of military architecture of the last Byzantine years. It is famous for its internal and external part. Almost the entire part of the two central towers is preserved. The castle was built in the early 14th century and served as a refuge and personal "treasury" of the Byzantine Emperor Ioannis Kantakouzenos. Such towers are considered to be the result of Western influence on Byzantine military architecture

The whole tower complex consisted of two enclosures, one exterior and one interior. The exterior, from which today few sections are preserved, was spread all over the hill. The interior occupies the end of the hill and part of it has been destroyed during the works for the development of the railroad crossing just below it. The two enclosures were reinforced with towers at three angles, while at the joining points of the two enclosures the two surviving towers were raised with the main entrance, to the internal part of the enclosure, set between them.

Picture 4. Double Tower in Pythio



Source: <https://www.in.gr/>

The large central tower is almost square in the ground plan, with sides length of 15 m. It has three storeys and was used as a residence. The second tower is lower, but was built at a higher height. It is also almost square, but smaller with dimensions of 7.40 x 7.30 m and is preserved at a height of 20 m. It consists of four floors with spherical domes. Each floor is independent. The second floor is accessible from the side road of the wall. The third floor is accessible via an internal corridor above the intermediate arched gate, while the fourth floor is accessible from the large tower through the corridor.

↪ Ancient Mesimvria

Mesimvria beach is located in front of the homonymous seaside settlement, on the southwestern edge of the Regional Unit of Evros. It is one of the most famous summer resorts of the area, best known for its archaeological site, located on the coastal zone.

The city seems to have been founded in the 6th century. B.C. It reached its peak in the period from the classical times until the middle of the 4th century. B.C. Mesimvria Zone, like the rest of the Samothrace colonies, initially served the needs of metropolis for agricultural products and commercial communication with the Thracian tribes of the interior of the region. But its original rural character changed relatively early - as early as the 6th century. B.C. - because trade and maritime movement of goods have proved particularly secure and profitable. However, the penetration of Athenians in the area, the tax imposition on the Samothraki colonies, as well as possibly events that completely lacked written historical evidence, led gradually - from the mid-4th century. B.C. - in the decline and gradual abandonment of the city.

The situation changes radically during the years of Macedonian domination (356 BC) and later during Roman conquest (46 AD), because land routes linking firstly Macedonian and then Roman colonies, are now preferred. As a result, trade declined. Land-based cities with a political-military character were established, which due to their geographical location played leading role in the movement of goods. The Egnatia road certainly accelerated the declining course of coastal colonies. There is no evidence showing the violent devastation of the Mesimvria Zone. It is most likely that in the years of decline the city was gradually abandoned. Mesimvria existed with its shrunken size until 200 BC, without having its own coinage. For the period from 100 BC. until the 5th century A.D. (early Byzantine times) there is little evidence that indicates occasional habitation, probably of rural character.

The archaeological site of Mesimvria-Zone includes the city and its cemetery. The city is surrounded by a wall, fortified by intervals with towers and encloses the north acropolis of the settlement. The southern part has been eroded by the sea. Much of the urban facilities discovered within the boundaries of the wall. There are roads, residential complexes and signs of an ancient trade market. Two public buildings have also been found, a shrine dedicated to ancient goddess Dimitra and a temple of god Apollo. In the southwestern part of the city there is a district probably related to the period of its decline.

The eastern part of the wall is divided and separates the city in two parts. The west part is the largest and constitutes the area of the main city. The buildings in the city are preserved and associated with housing, but there is also evidence of laboratories. Houses followed the usual architectural style of 5th and 4th century B.C. and some had an upper floor. An unusual finding is the large number of amphorae (188) of the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. that were found on the foundations of a building complex. They were probably a system for protecting the earth from moisture.

Picture 5. Ancient Mesimvria



Source: <https://greece.terrabook.com>

Picture 6. Ancient Mesimvria– The building with amphorae



Source: <https://greece.terrabook.com>

The most important monuments and architectural buildings of the archaeological site are:

- Sanctuary of Dimitra. Small construction of white well processed marble with dimensions 1.50 x 7.50m. Inside, there were silver, gold, silver and gold plated tiles with works related to the ancient goddess Dimitra. 4th century BC.
- Sanctuary of Apollo. Rectangular building with dimensions 9 x 15m. It belongs to a building complex 35 x 45m with a central paved courtyard enclosed by a gallery. Many fragments of the 6th and 5th century BC pottery were found inside, among others with engraved inscriptions.
- Building Complex. A large number of amphorae were found. In the middle ground-level amphorae that were found, are considered that were used to drain the soil. 6th-5th century BCH.
- A unique gate to the west of the city wall.
- Part of the western wall.
- Part of the west wall with the remains of two towers.

In 1966, began the first systematic excavation with the funding of the Archaeological Society.

Swimming is not permitted in front of the ruins of ancient Mesimvria, as archeological investigations have not been completed and it is believed that much of the ancient city is in the water.

↳ Pomak Villages (“Pomakohoria”) of Parikon and Roussa

The villages of Pomaks are famous for their wonderful traditional architecture, prehistoric rock paintings and the unique “Tekke” in operation.

The village of Roussa (old Roussalar) located at an altitude of 370 meters, belongs to the municipality of Soufli and is close to the Greek-Bulgarian borders. Roussa has been inhabited continuously since prehistoric times, according to archaeological finds that have been found in the area since the Iron Age.

The Tekke of Roussa, located 3km outside the homonymous village, is an Ottoman Tekke, a meeting point for dervishes, which has been renovated and merely operates today. It is considered one of the oldest preserved Tekke in the Balkans and one of the two major centers of Bektashism. The Tekke of Roussa is also known as the Tekke of Segit Ali Sultan, Thekil of Kizil Deli or the Bektashis Monastery of Kizil Deli in Roussa.

It was founded by the dervish Segit Ali Sultan in 1400, as the Ottoman nameplate says on one of the monastery buildings.

In the center of the buildings of the Tekke of Roussa stands a mulberry tree of 600 years old, the fruits of which, according to tradition, protect those who eat them from any disease. The same tree is found in the Tekke of the Bektashis in the village of Hacı Vektaş, Asia Minor. Around the centuries-old mulberry is the kitchen, the konaki (prison), the sepulchral monument of Seyyed Ali Sultan, the prayer room and modern facilities for visitors. In the cemetery of Tekke of Roussa there are the tombs of the wise men of Tekke (Sheikhids) and dervishes.

A separate meeting takes place every year in Tekke of Roussa: On May 6, the day the Monastery celebrates Saint George who is a common Saint of Orthodox and Alevism, the Metropolitan of Didymoteicho, Orestiada and Soufli, along with numerous people devoted to the above-mentioned religions gather together in the Tekke.

Picture 7. Tekke of Roussa



Source: <https://www.xronos.gr>

Picture 8. Mulberry tree of 600 years old at Tekke of Roussa



Source: <https://www.e-evros.gr/>

Furthermore, another interesting site is the megalithic tombs (dolmen), located on the peaks of the low hills around the village of Roussa, which were built during the Early Iron Age (9th-8th century BC). The oldest ones, of the 9th century BC, are larger and can be described as megalithic tombs, besides the fact that they are monumental, like those of Bulgaria.

The graves are made of five slate slabs with the characteristic lateral opening of the dolmens in the chamber or in the hallway. Inside the tombs were placed large vessels with the ashes of the dead or directly the ashes along with any grave gifts.

Picture 9. Megalithic Tombs (Dolmen) of Roussa



Source: <https://novoscriptorium.com/>

At the foot of the hill named Hilia, situated west of Roussa, there are rock carvings under the Hill of Sivris. They are 700 meters after the site of Balaban Chegir and they were created during 900 - 1100 BC.

The rock carvings depict incised figures of women and men in various postures but also in dance scenes, reptiles, birds that may be identified with swallows and stellar bodies symbolizing the sun and the moon. The rock carvings are associated with religious beliefs and they have apocryphal and magical characteristics. It has to be mentioned that people continued to create carvings out of their homes until the last century.

Picture 10. Rock carvings of Roussa



Source: <https://kastropolites.com/>

↳ Protected area of Dadia Forest

The National Park of the forest of Dadia - Lefkimi - Soufli is one of the most important protected areas at national, european and international level. The forest has pine and oak trees, pastures and cultivated areas and creates an ideal environment for birds of prey. The National Park encompasses three of Europe's four species of vultures ("black vulture", "Griffon vulture" and "Egyptian vulture"), and hosts the only "Mavrogypa" colony in the Balkans.

More information provided in section 5.5.1.

Picture 11. Forest of Dadia



Source: <http://alternatrips.gr/>

↳ Delta of Evros River

It is one of the most important wetlands in Greece and Europe. With a total area of 95,000 hectares (80,000 hectares onshore, 15,000 hectares water area) it has been included in the list of protected areas of the Ramsar Convention (1971), due to its important host species. Part of the Delta is also designated as Special Protection Area and is proposed as a Community Interest Site on the Natura 2000 Network. *More information provided in section 5.5.2.*

Picture 12. Aerial view of the Evros river Delta



Source: <https://www.evros-delta.gr/>

↩ The ancient cemetery of Doxipara

The ancient Tomb of Doxipara-Zoni is a Roman burial monument dating from the 2nd century AD and is located near the villages of Mikri Doxipara, Zoni and Chelidona in the Regional Unit of Evros. Four members of a wealthy family in the area died in succession, were cremated and buried there, where the great Doxipara tomb was built in memory of them.

It has diameter of 60m and height 7,5m. It was one of the largest tombs in the area and was developed on a natural hill, so that the tomb could be seen from far away. Th tomb offers unlimited view to the mountains of the Bulgarian Rhodope and to the view of Kyprinos and Arda. It was gradually built in the early 2nd century AD, so as to cover the burial-cremations of four members of a family who died and were buried in succession. The excavation was found four large pits containing the ashes of three men and a woman along with numerous other objects that accompanied them, such as clay, glass and bronze pots, copper lamps, lamps, weapons, wooden little boxes, etc.

Next to the pits containing the cremated remains and the bodies of the dead, were the five carriages that had been transported to the tumulus area along with their trunks and five more horses. In all carriages are preserved the metal functional and decorative elements, while in the two of them are preserved the imprints of their wooden parts.

Picture 13. The ancient cemetery of Doxipara– Horse & carriage burials



Source: <https://www.emtgreece.com/>

In many areas of the tomb were found broken pots, ashes, animal bones and remnants of the ceremonies performed during the construction of the tomb in honor of the dead. A

large number of broken small clay pots containing offerings to the dead were found on two adobe parallelepiped structures and also were found two holes full of ashes.

Picture 14. The ancient cemetery of Doxipara – Grave gifts



Source: <https://www.e-evros.gr/>

➤ Didymoteicho and its Byzantine castles, caves and Vajazit Mosque.

Didymoteicho is located 95 km far from Alexandroupolis. It was built by the Byzantines on the ruins of Plotinoupolis. According to one version – took its name due to the "Twin Wall" on the north side of the castle, because the castle is double. According to another version on the 6th century AD, there were two cities located side by side, Plotinoupolis on the hill of St. Peter and Didymoteicho on the hill of Kale, whose castles linked the center of each other, creating an "8", where between the castles passed the Traianoupolis - Andrianoupolis street. Consequently, the area was called Didymoteicho, due to the twin castles.

Byzantine churches, mosques, remains of castles, walls and fortifications coexist in a curious as well as attractive residential place. In the central square, dominated by the imposing Mehmet Mosque or the Bayazid Mosque - the largest of its kind in Europe – was built by Murat I in 1326 and was further constructed in 1420 by Mohammed I.

It has been designated by Hellenic general secretary of culture as the most important Islamic monument in Europe. The walls of the building are approximately 2.50m thick and the main entrance is on the south side. On the southeast side is the imposing minaret which

originally had a balcony. In 1913 the Turks added a second balcony, taller than the first, rebuilding the top of the collapsed minaret.

The monument is under collapse but since 1969 some reconstruction activities have begun. During World War II, sheets of lead were removed from the roof and in 1969 sheets were replaced. In 1970, after severe weather, part of the imposing cylindrical minaret collapsed. During period 1998-1999 the Hellenic Ministry of Culture covered the roof with a plastic film to protect the monument from the rain. In 2008, part of the minaret collapsed and destroyed the protective plastic film of roof.

On March 22, 2017, much of the roof and the mosque's building were destroyed by fire. For its restoration, a project of € 3,428,876 is being implemented, which has been integrated into the Regional Operational Program of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace 2014-2020. The Ephorate of Antiquities in Evros, as a supervisory authority, drafted the Monument Rehabilitation Framework Plan and will proceed with the design and operation of a website with information material as part of the publicity of the project being implemented. At the same time, a research program is being prepared by the National Technical University of Athens on the proposal for reconstruction of the oak roof and restoration of the mosque's wall.

Picture 15. Vajazit Mosque



Source: Project team

Picture 16. Vajazit Mosque



Source: Project team

It is also worth visiting the Didymoteicho Folklore Museum, which is housed in the neoclassical Hadjirvasani building (1900). The Museum's collections have been created since 1966. Today there are about 2.500 items in the museum. One can see traditional clothing from the region, other clothing items, embroidered and woven linen, traditional jewelry, church items, religious works and utensils, agricultural and textile tools, as well as tools of the traditional craftsmen: carpenter, blacksmith, shoemaker, textile dyers.

In addition, in the museum are displayed a traditional distillery for making rakia and an old liquor store as well as old printing press utensils. Moreover, there are two marble reliefs depicting the "Thracian Horse", the Thracian deity who were believed used to protected their family, their travels and their raids

It is also worth mentioned, the archive material of the Museum, which was donated and includes theater programs, exam programs from the Zappie School of Andrianoupolis (1882) and various other publications and manuscripts.

Finally, in the backyard of the museum it is exposed a sesame oil mill (giahanas). These sesame oil production laboratories used to operate in Didymoteicho, until the 1960s

Picture 17. Didymoteicho Folklore Museum



Source: Project team

Tourists are also attracted by a number of sights such as:

- Didymoteicho Castle, or as it is called by the locals "Kale", which stands on a rocky hill of 107m in elevation, on the left bank of Erythropotamos river and where traces of human presence are preserved from prehistoric period
- The metropolitan post-Byzantine church of Agios Athanasios, with magnificent portable religious artworks, tributes to the city's guilds and carved ikonostasi, where according to the legend Karolis IV (king of Sweden) was imprisoned in one of the stone burrows.
- The rocky hill, known to the locals by the name of Agia Petra, where remains of Roman Plotinus have been found, founded by Roman Emperor Trajan in honor of Plotinus wife.

Picture 18. The Bridge Gate (Kalioporta) at Didymoteicho Castle



Source: <https://el.wikipedia.org/>

Picture 19. Plotinopolis



Source: <https://www.culture.gr/>

4.3 Opportunities for developing alternative forms of tourism

At this chapter are analyzing the opportunities for developing alternative forms of tourism in the regional Unit of Evros, in relation to the natural and cultural resources mentioned below:

Eco Tourism

Eco tourism is associated with nature and focuses on trips to rural and provincial areas of developed countries, with the aim of collecting experiences from local culture and exploring the area (Bell et al, 2007). Eco tourism trips take place in places with rich flora and fauna, but also in places where there is a great cultural heritage. Tourists respect the environment and avoid as much as possible activities that may harm it

In this context, the Regional Unit of Evros has great potential to develop eco tourism because it is a region with rich natural environment, as it has two national parks (Delta of Evros River and the Forest of Dadia), eight Natura sites and it is rich in historical and cultural heritage and last but not least has the island of Samothrace.

The Delta of Evros River is an ecosystem of international importance as it is one of the most important wetlands recognized by the Ramsar Convention. The ecotourism program is designed to cover all groups of visitors and includes individual visitors, groups but also special groups such as schools, birdwatchers, photographers, students, etc.

The Forest of Dadia is located in the middle of the Regional Unit of Evros, covering the southeastern hilly ends of the Rhodope mountains. It has a distinct geographical location internationally as it is located at the crossroads between Asia, Europe and Africa and near the eastern migratory corridor of many bird species. At this rich mosaic of habitats can be found many animals and plants. In particular, there are more than 48 species of mammals, including wolves, deers, squirrels, bats and 41 species of reptiles and amphibians. But what makes the Forest of Dadia special and unique in Europe are the birds of prey that are also living there.

Picture 20. Boating in the Delta of Evros river



Source: <http://www.evros-delta.gr/>

Picture 21. Black vulture (Aegypius monachus) at the forest of Dadia



Source: <https://www.wwf.gr/>

School-Educational Tourism

Educational tourism is considered to be one of the most important emerging tourism markets and can offer significant benefits in an area with rich cultural sites, which are an attraction for educational / student tourism, coming from both Greece and abroad.

School trips or educational tourism are a key priority for the Regional Unit of Evros, because of its comparative advantages but also because it helps to lengthen the tourist season. The Regional Unit of Evros is one of the few regions in Greece that having two National Parks with great exposure, located close enough to each other, with visitor information and service programs. In addition, Soufli operates a well-organized environmental education center which implements environmental education programs with schools from all over Greece.

Picture 22. Information Center of Dadia forest



Source: <https://dadia-np.gr/>

Religious tourism

Religious Tourism is defined as the sum of all tourist activities related to traveling by individuals or organized groups to places, sites and monuments of religious importance for reasons of religious, cultural, educational and informational interest. In this approach, the term 'pilgrimage' refers to the above set of activities when centralized or pilgrimage is carried out, and / or participation in religious ceremonies / events, and / or worship.

However, it should not be excluded the possibility of visiting other groups of tourists who combine their trip along with other tourist activities. After all, sacred places and religious festivals have always been attracted by groups of people with general interests such as experience and knowledge of new cultures and traditions. Connecting with the culture of the place and the art of the day is another important reason that motivates tourists to visit the sacred sites.

Byzantine and post-Byzantine artworks, mosaics, frescoes, religious artworks and other religious monuments are attracting thousands of tourists every year. Some of the reasons that justifies their interest is the need of having a deeper knowledge of traditions, culture and the link between art and religion.

The religious monumental capital of the Regional Unit of Evros is also of great interest, with the most important examples being the Church of the Saint Theodor which (built in a cave), the Church of Panagia Kosmosotira in Feres, the monastery of Kornofolia and the Tekke of Roussa.

Picture 23. Monastery of Kornofolia



Source: <http://dadia-np.gr/>

Wellness and spa tourism

Increasing life expectancy and consequently the average age of people, rise ideas for the development of new alternative forms of tourism such as Spa tourism. Wellness and spa tourism encompasses all the activities and relationships of the temporary movement and residence of people aimed at preventing, maintaining and restoring their physical and mental health and well-being, by using natural healing resources.

Within the boundaries of the Regional Unit of Evros there are two areas that can be found thermal baths: Traianoupolis and Samothraki. Both thermal bath facilities in Traianoupolis and Samothraki are well equipped and offer an alternative holiday option.

Picture 24. Thermal Baths of Traianoupolis



Source: Project team

Picture 25. Thermal Baths of Traianoupolis



Source: Project team

Picture 26. Thermal Baths of Samothraki



Source: <https://samothraki.gr/>

Congress Tourism

This form of alternative tourism includes all kinds of organized events (conferences or meetings), at various levels, from local to international. The duration of tourist visits to attend a congress usually lasts from two to four days and is combined with various other types such as educational tourism. Regarding the required infrastructure, it is evident that modern and large conference centers and auxiliary spaces are considered necessary (Igoumenakis et al., 1999).

In recent years the very good development of hotel infrastructure mainly in the southern part of the Regional Unit of Evros, as well as the establishment of the University Hospital have been key factors contributing to the development of conference tourism in the region. In particular, many conferences of science, medicine, business and more take place in Alexandroupolis, which is the capital of the Regional Unit of Evros.

Hunting Tourism

In recent years, hunting tourism is a new type of tourism that has been developed in the Regional Unit of Evros. Due to the many hunting places with rich variety and number of game species, Evros was always place for hunters and hunting associations from all over Greece and sometimes from abroad.

There are famous hunting places in Thrace such as “Ortikotopi” and “Starohorafa”, while It is noteworthy that several areas of the Prefecture of Evros (Orestiada, Didymoteicho, Feres, Soufli, etc.) are flooded by hunters during the months of August and September as well as during winter months.

City Tourism

City tourism is a form of tourism in which individuals (mainly those of high-level of education) visit a city for a short period of time usually for 3 or 4 days, motivated by various purposes (Ilgoumenakis et al., 1999). Usually city tourism is directly related to other forms such as educational and congress tourism, but also there are other attractions for these kind of alternative tourists such as nightlife, shopping, excursions, entertainment, etc.

In recent years, tourist development has been observed in the urban region of Evros. New hotel units are constantly being built along its coastline in order to cover the increased tourist traffic, improving both the capacity and the quality of services provided. The urban and semi-urban centers of the region also have valuable natural and cultural resources with a noumerous of associations and bodies to promote tourism through cultural events such as:

- ▶ **Youth Festival of Tycherö:** This is the most popular three-day event held in Evros every August.
- ▶ **Youth Festival of Ardas:** A five-day festival on the banks of the Ardas River in Evros, featuring concerts and other events such as moto cross races, beach volleyball games, horse riding, 4x4 races, theatrical performances, etc.
- ▶ **Silk Festival in Soufli:** In Soufli there are cultural events in June on which silk is the general subject.
- ▶ **“Eleftheria” Alexandroupolis:** On May 14th and throughout the month, a plethora of events are being held in memory of the liberation of the city by the Bulgarians.
- ▶ **Eleftheria” Didymoteicho:** They are a series of cultural and artistic events held each year in May for the anniversary of the liberation of Didymoteicho.

5. Analysis and evaluation of accessibility and visiting rate to the sites of interest

For the evaluation of the accessibility level of the Regional Unit of Evros, it will be analyzed the geographical location but also regional transportation, accommodation, communication and healthcare facilities in the area.

5.1 Accessibility

First of all, regarding its **geographical location** as it was previously mentioned, the Regional Unit of Evros it is located at the northeast corner of Greece and is the country's natural border with Bulgaria to the north and Turkey to the east. These data show the remote but also the cross-border character of the Regional Unit of Evros, which contributes to the easy access of foreign tourists

Picture 27. Road network of the Regional Unit of Evros



Concerning **transport infrastructure**, the Regional Unit of Evros has Alexandroupolis International Airport which needs further development and upgrades, as only domestic flights serving the connection with Athens and Crete have been operated so far. The expansion of flights internationally can greatly contribute to the boost of regional tourism.

Furthermore, the Port of Alexandroupolis is considered as a gateway to the wider Balkan region and everyone's ambition is to become a major hub for the transportation of large number of people and goods in the future.

In addition, the construction of the Egnatia Motorway has removed the region from geographical isolation, turning it into a central point of connection between east and west, helping to facilitate international trade and greatly improving the accessibility of the region.

Evros has a well-developed network of national and provincial roads connecting the south with its northern part, while operating three border stations in Kastanias, Pythios and Kipoi, as well as two further border points in Kyprino and Ormenio.

What is more, Evros is connected by rail to Athens, Thessaloniki and Bulgaria, and when the upgrading of the section of the route Alexandroupolis - Ormenio, is completed, there will be a plethora of towns and villages - mainly those located along Evros river - in shorter times and with a higher density of routes.

It has to mentioned that, in the future the commercial part of the port will be linked to the railway line for international freight transport to the countries of the Balkans and Eastern Europe.

5.2 Accommodation infrastructure

Tourist accommodation

In terms of capacity, Evros has all kinds of accommodation facilities such as hotels, motels, inns and rooms to let. The existing capacity of hotel accommodation in Evros in 2017 is presented at Table 1, which shows that there were 62 hotel and similar accommodation facilities (accounts for the 16.23% of the Region of Eastern Macedonia – Thrace) and also 2 out of 16 tourist campsites that are located in the Region of Macedonia - Thrace. As a result, the total number of beds in Evros amounts to 4,259, which equal to the 17.1% of those in the region of Eastern Macedonia – Thrace.

Table 1. Capacity of hotel and Tourist campsites in 2017

	Number of accommodation facilities			Number of beds		
	Hotels & other similar facilities	Tourist campsites	Total	Hotels & other similar facilities	Tourist campsites	Total
REGIONAL UNIT OF EVROS	62	2	64	3.810	321	4.259
EASTERN MACEDONIA – THRACE REGION	382	16	398	22.048	2.094	24.938

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2019 / Processing: Project team

The following table shows the tourist accommodation facilities of the Regional Unit of Evros by category. The majority of the accommodations facilities (28 out of 62) are 2-star with 651 rooms and 1,210 beds. The total number of rooms in the hotel accommodation is 1,979 and the number of beds in 3,810 (17.8% and 17.3% respectively for the Region of East Macedonia - Thrace).

Table 2. Tourist accommodation facilities in 2017

PLACE	5*****			4****			3***		
	H	R	B	H	R	B	H	R	B
REGIONAL UNIT OF EVROS	3	384	762	2	142	293	19	658	1.254
REGION OF EASTERN MACEDONIA AND THRACE	12	1.197	2.421	30	1.955	3.949	99	3.198	6.392

PLACE	2**			1*			TOTAL		
	H	R	B	H	R	B	H	R	B
REGIONAL UNIT OF EVROS	28	651	1.210	10	144	291	62	1.979	3.810
REGION OF EASTERN MACEDONIA AND THRACE	166	3.635	7.088	75	1.126	2.198	382	11.111	22.048

H: Hotels, R: Rooms, B: Beds

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2019 / Processing: Project team

5.3 Healthcare infrastructure

As far as healthcare infrastructure is concerned, there are health centers in Alexandroupolis and Didymoteicho as well as in Dikaia, Orestiada, Soufli, Feres and Samothraki, while there are also numerous private clinics, diagnostic centers. As a result, current care system is at a satisfactory

level which provides the required security that is a necessary component of a local tourism product.

5.4 Telecommunications infrastructure

Telecommunication and internet infrastructure is also well developed, and in recent years hot spots have been created and expanded - at the initiative of local Authorities- that provide free connections and meet the increased needs of visitors. Alexandroupolis is the headquarter of the telecommunication network and the connection is made through a digital wireless network of 155 Mb/s and capacity of up to 4x480 connections, while the current exploitation is less than 50%. There are three digital centers in Samothraki, one in Chora, in Lakkoma and in Karyotes, with PSTN / ISDN connections installed.

5.5 Tourist visits

Concerning tourist visits to the regional points of interest, a significant proportion of visits are taking place to the forest of Dadia and Delta of Evros river.

In Evros there are **the forest of Dadia - Lefkimi - Tycherio** and the **wetland of Delta Evros river**. These are two areas of natural beauty and environmental significance.

5.5.1 Forest of Dadia

Dadia forest with two strictly protected zones of 72,900 hectares and a total area of 357,100 hectares has been protected since 1980 by national and international conventions and legislation. The forest hosts 36 of Europe's 38 rare species of endangered birds of prey, most notably the eastern imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*) and the Lesser Spotted Eagle (*Aquila pomarina*). It is a very important area where live different species of world fauna and three of Europe's four species of vultures (black vulture, griffon vulture, black vulture). The vegetation consists of a mixed oak and pine forest, constituting a unique ecosystem with rare species of flora and fauna.

The Dadia - Lefkimi - Soufli National Park has been set up to protect the area, which is one of the most important habitats in Europe characterized by the Common Ministerial Decision No35633 FEK¹ Δ911/ 13-10-2006 "Dadia - Lefkimi - Soufli Forest National Park", while being one of the

¹ Reference to the relevant national official publication

most fully managed areas in the country. It is now included in the Greek Natura 2000 catalog. The total area covered by Natura 2000 network is 43,000 hectares, which, according to the Common Ministerial Decision of 1980, includes two strict protection areas (7,290 hectares).

Also to the west of Dadia, at a distance of about 9 kilometers is the Katrantzidas forest recreation area. It is a 740-acre forest area managed by the Gerakina Women's Agricultural Tourism Association. The route from the village of Dadia to the Katrantzidas Forest Recreation Area is an alternative route and ends at the access point of the neighboring Evros Delta National Park.

Picture 28. Egyptian vulture or Black vulture at the Forest of Dadia



Source: <https://www.evros-news.gr/>

Regarding the administrative framework of the National Park, the responsible management bodies are: the Management Body, the Municipality of Soufli, the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace and the Forest Service. The responsibilities of the Management Body are mainly focused on the operation of the Information Center (Environmental Education), supervision, implementation of pilot programs, field surveys and strategies for enhancing sustainable development in the region of Dadia. The Forest Service is responsible for the implementation of forestry legislation, while the Municipality of Soufli and the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace play a supporting role especially in matters related to infrastructure improvement and technical studies. The aforementioned bodies as well as the representatives of the Ministries of Rural Development and the Environment, Energy and Climate Change, local cooperatives and non-governmental environmental organizations participate in the Board of the National Park.

In the period 2007-2008 the annual visits of the National Park ranged from 23-25,000 per year. Most of the visitors were school students who made educational-nature trips combining a visit

to the Soufli environmental education center. During the five-year period 2009-2013, the rate of visits has been drastically reduced, and since 2014 there have been signs of a recovery in the flow of visitors now coming from the Balkan countries and Turkey.

The decline in demand is mainly due to the decline in domestic visitors due to the financial crisis and the poor visibility of the park to foreign tourists and international tourist markets.

Picture 29. White-tailed eagle (Haliaeetus albicilla) at the Forest of Dadia



Source: <https://wwfaction.wordpress.com/2012/05/04/haliaeetus/>

Tour of the National Park

In the National Park there are hiking trails and marked paths of varying degrees of difficulty with the corresponding signage enabling visitors to wander through the beautiful landscapes and come close to the particular fauna of the area.

In particular, there are the following four (4) paths²:

1. Orange path

It has low level of difficulty and starts from the information center to arrive at the watchtower of birds of prey.

2. Yellow path

It follows the path from the watchtower birds of prey to the information center. The journey takes 45 minutes and there is high level of difficulty

² https://dadia-np.gr/?page_id=3134

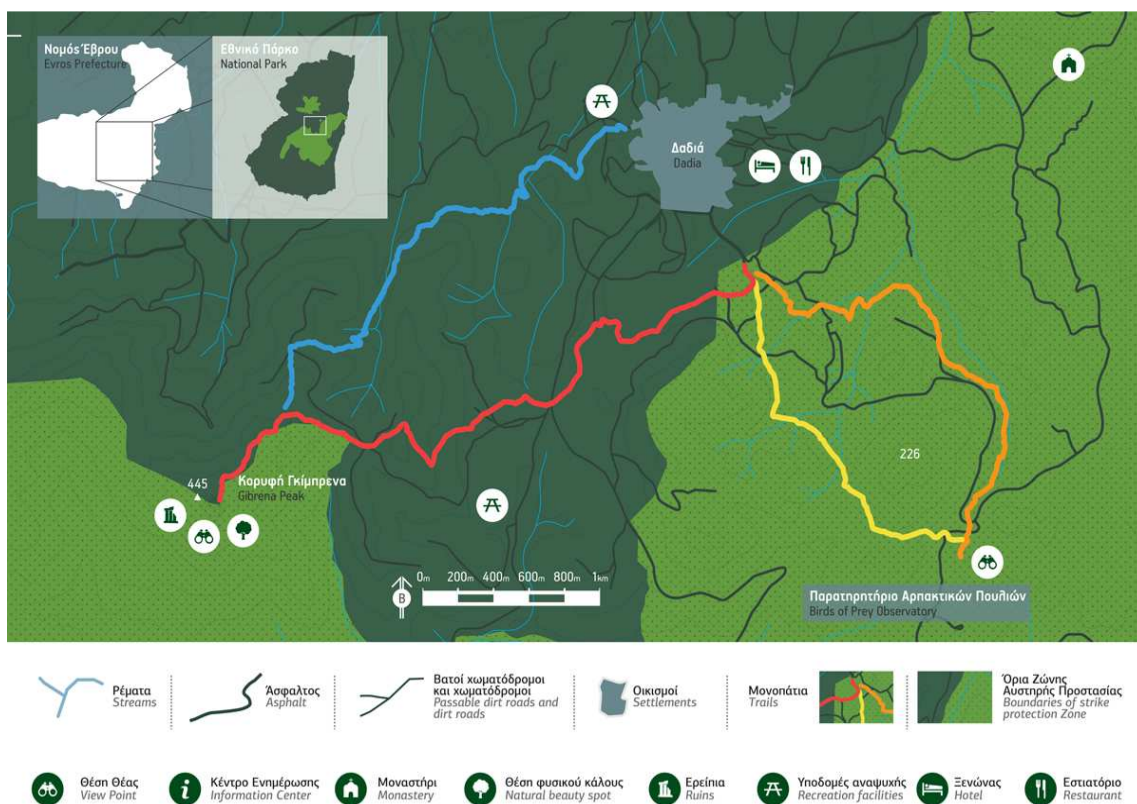
3. Red path

It is a path of medium level of difficulty, with a total duration of 2 hours. The visitor crosses the black pine forests through the red path and passes the ruins of the Byzantine fortress, ending at the top of Gibrena with an altitude of 520 meters where can enjoy panoramic views.

4. Blue Path

It is the returning path from the top of Gibrena that crosses the other side of the forest following Diavolorevma. It is a path of medium level of difficulty and lasts 1.5 hours (National Park Management Authority, 2017).

Picture 30. Map of the paths in Dadia Forest



Source: <http://dadia-np.gr/>

The marked paths are accessible all over the year. The days of the fire season are excluded (May 1 - October 31) where the Fire Risk Index is 3.4 or 5. The Fire Risk Index is updated daily for the following day and is available on the Civil Protection Service and Management Body's website.

Furthermore, in the park it is possible to follow the ***special road routes***³, (under strict traffic rules), either by bicycle or by car, as well as by the vehicle of the local eco tour guide.

The special road routes are the following:

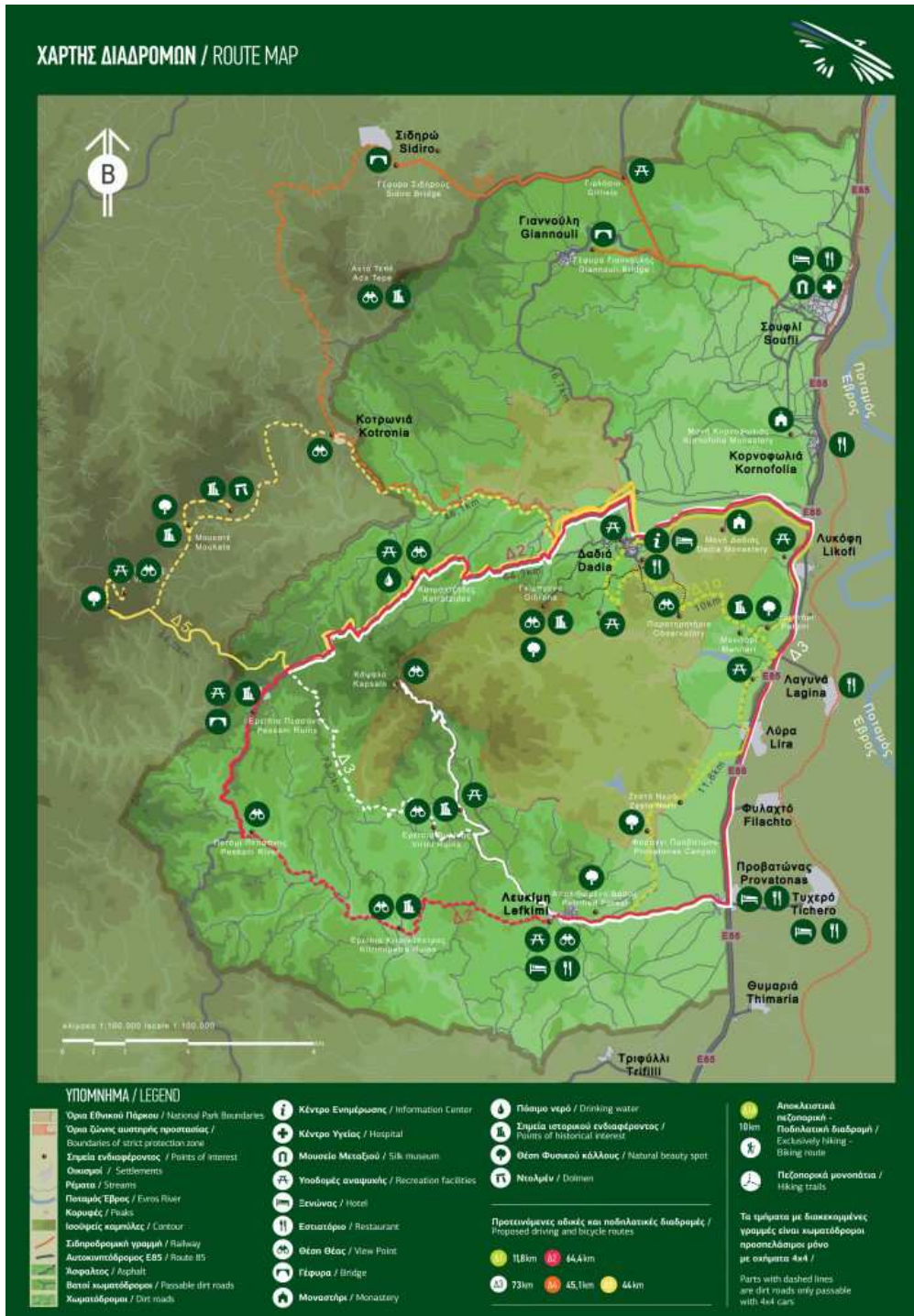
- ◆ **Route 1:** Dadia- Watchtower of birds of prey – Lira – Lefkimi.
- ◆ **Route 2:** Dadia – Fossilised Forest of Lefkimi – Kitrinopetra – Dadia.
- ◆ **Route 3:** Dadia – Lefkimi – Kapsalo – Virini – Dadia.
- ◆ **Route 4:** Dadia – Kotronia – Sidiro – Giannouli – Soufli – Kornofolia – Movή Dadia.
- ◆ **Route 5:** Dadia – Treis Vrises – Kotronia – Dadia.
- ◆ **Route 6:** Loutros – Pessani – Katratzides – Dadia.
- ◆ **Route 7:** Dadia - Giannouli -Soufli.

All of the above routes pass through the regional forest, traditional settlements, monuments and recreational areas and are an option for day trips close to nature. So far, these trips are organized with the help of the National Park Information and Information Center and some specialized travel agencies in the area. Many of the day trips are organized and planned by local cultural and nature-based hiking and mountaineering clubs.

Part of these routes is hard roads accessible only by 4x4 vehicles or bicycles. Visitors can choose to follow the following road routes either individually on their own vehicles or by using the vehicle of the Management Body, accompanied by staff, upon request.

³ https://dadia-np.gr/?page_id=3136

Picture 31. Map of special roads routes in the forest of Dadia



Source: <http://dadia-np.gr/>

In the National Park operates a traditional guesthouse that can serve a limited number of guests. There are hostels in Soufli, Tychero and Feres that can accommodate more guests. The average

annual occupancy for 2015 was particularly low (8.7%), reflecting the low tourist visits in the region of Soufli.

A few meters away from the village of Lefkimi, there is a monument of nature of rare beauty which is the only one in Europe: the 40-years-old fossilized forest of Lefkimi- Filakto, whose fossils are scattered in a green forest.

Picture 32. Fossilized forest of Lefkimi- Filakto



Source: <http://www.koukoulihotel.gr>

Scientists estimate that the **fossilized forest of Lefkimi-Filakto** was created because of the volcanic activity that was occurring in the area. There is a small exhibition area with samples of fossil finds from the wider area, within the facilities of the Tourist Center in Tycherio which is located at the entrance of the village, by the lake. Fossilized leaves of cinnamon, fern, coffee tree, rubber tree and ancestral vines are included in the findings of the Filakto petrified forest and are considered to be of great value due to their rarity both in Greece and in Europe.

5.5.2 Delta of Evros River

Delta of Evros river is one of the most important wetlands recognized by the Ramsar Convention in 1971 and protected under the Community Directive 79/409 and the Barcelona Convention (1977). It is an ecosystem of international importance located at the southeastern area of the Regional Unit of Evros, 20 km away from Alexandroupolis. Evros river is the second largest river in Eastern Europe (430 km) and the largest in the Balkan Peninsula, while it is Greece's natural border with Bulgaria and Turkey. Delta of Evros river wetland has been included in the list of protected areas of the Ramsar International Convention because of the important species are living there. In addition, part of the Delta is designated as Special Protection Area and Proposed

as Community Site on the Natura 2000 Network. The total area of the National Park is 500,000 hectares of which 100,000 are located in Turkey.

Picture 33. Sunset in Delta of Evros river



Source: <https://www.evros-delta.gr/>

Over a total area of 500,000 hectares, there is numerous of endangered species of world fauna and endow many rare plants of European flora. Many species of fish, amphibians, reptiles, and more than 40 species of mammals are living in the waters and small islands created in a majestic landscape of extraordinary beauty. In Delta of Evros river 304 bird species have been recorded from the total number of 423 bird species that are living in Greece. The phytogeographical interest of the area is quite interesting, as it hosts species that rarely occur in Greece. Furthermore, the ornithological interest of the area is also of great interest, as it is a natural habitat for rare or endangered species such as Mediterranean shag, Flamingo, Eagles, Swans, etc. The area also hosts 28 species of amphibians and reptiles, 40 species of mammals and 46 species of fish.

*Picture 34. White-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) in Delta of Evros river*



Source: <https://www.evros-delta.gr/>

The establishment of the National Park affects about 10,000 residents of the surrounding settlements (Feres, Monastiraki, Loutros, etc.), which belong to the Municipality of Alexandroupolis.

Regarding the administrative framework of the National Park, the responsible management bodies are: the Management Body, the Municipality of Alexandroupolis, the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace and the Forest Service and the Coast Guard. The responsibilities of the Management Body are mainly focused on the operation of the Information Center (Environmental Education), supervision, implementation of pilot programs and field surveys

The Forest Service is responsible for the implementation of forestry legislation, the Coast Guard for offenses occurring within the boundaries of the wetland, while the Municipality of Alexandroupolis, the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace play a supporting role especially in matters related to infrastructure improvement and technical studies. The aforementioned bodies as well as the representatives of the Ministries of Rural Development and the Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Economy, Competitiveness and Shipping local cooperatives and non-governmental environmental organizations participate in the Board of the National Park.

In the period 2007-2008 the annual visits of the National Park ranged from 28-30,000 per year. Most of the visitors were school students who made educational-nature trips combining a visit to the Soufli environmental education center. During the five-year period 2009-2013, the rate of visits has been drastically reduced, and since 2014 there have been signs of a recovery in the flow of visitors now coming from the Balkan countries and Turkey.

The guided tour of the Delta includes hiking trails and a shuttle bus to points of interest. In addition, there are water routes along the natural canals with traditional boats, always under the supervision of an eco-guide, to observe the vegetation and the birds and animals that live there. The required equipment is provided by the information center.

Moreover, throughout the school year, the Management Body implements many environmental education programs.

These programs are either short or long lasting. Every year new programs are designed to target students in the wider Evros Delta region, as well as students visiting the wetland from all over Greece.

In addition, students in the area have the opportunity to participate in yearly environmental education programs that organize year-round activities, with wetland visits, productive user interviews, bird watching, experiential activities and much more. At the end of the course, students do a final task or presentation.

Shorter duration programs may be daily or may include a multi-day combination of informative presentations and wetland trips. They are designed by the Management Body for all small visitors arriving in the Evros Delta or following an invitation from a school with a specific theme.

Daily programs implemented at the Information Center may include informational viewing, construction, painting, environmental games, wetland activities, sightseeing, bird watching and much more.

Training programs are always tailored to the specificity and requirements of the teams involved. The Managing Authority has developed a very good partnership at the local level with teachers and students.

In the daily programs that are implemented at the Information Center may include informational videos, painting, environmental games, wetland activities, sightseeing, bird watching and much more.

Training programs are always tailored to the requirements of the teams involved. The Managing Authority has developed a very good partnership at the local level with teachers and students.

Finally, in the neighboring areas of Delta of Evros river, there are remarkable monuments of historical, cultural and religious importance such as:

- The church of Panagia Kosmosotira and the Aqueduct in Feres.
- The archaeological site of Doriskos.
- The archaeological site of Traianoupolis.
- The warm baths of Traianoupolis
- The hill of Saint George (Acropolis of Traianoupolis)
- The Prophet Elias (Platanotopos)
- The monastery of Saint John the Theologian.

5.5.3 Tourist Visits to the area based on arrivals and overnight stays

Tourist visits information

In 2017 the majority of tourist arrivals were recorded in the Municipality of Alexandroupolis the and also in the Municipality of Orestiada. The same situation is for the overnight stays, too. Moreover, according to the following tables the majority of tourist arrivals is related to domestic tourists (64,4% of the total), while a smaller percentage to 35,6% to foreign ones.

Table 3. Arrival to tourist accommodation facilities (excluding campsites), by Regional Unit and Municipality, in 2017

Place	Arrivals of domestic tourists	Arrivals of foreign tourists	Total	Percentage (%) of total available beds where data are reported
MUNICIPALITY OF ALEXANDROUPOLIS	66.497	45.215	111.712	93
MUNICIPALITY OF DIDYMOTEICHO	4.437	790	5.227	100
MUNICIPALITY OF ORESTIADA	13.893	1.796	15.689	95,5
MUNICIPALITY OF SAMOTHRAKI	6.125	2.748	8.873	91,4
MUNICIPALITY OF SOUFLI	1.736	821	2.557	88,3
REGIONAL UNIT OF EVROS	92.688	51.370	144.058	93,3
REGION OF EASTERN MACEDONIA AND THRACE	352.469	296.546	649.015	86,8

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2019 / Processing: Project team

Table 4. Overnight stays at tourist accommodation facilities (excluding campsites), by Regional Unit and Municipality, in 2017

Place	Overnight stays of domestic tourists	Overnight stays of foreign tourists	Total	Percentage (%) of total available beds where data are reported
MUNICIPALITY OF ALEXANDROUPOLIS	163.300	114.516	277.816	93,0
MUNICIPALITY OF DIDYMOTEICHO	14.465	1.682	16.147	100,0
MUNICIPALITY OF ORESTIADA	43.789	4.468	48.257	95,5
MUNICIPALITY OF SAMOTHRAKI	17.906	10.064	27.970	91,4

Place	Overnight stays of domestic tourists	Overnight stays of foreign tourists	Total	Percentage (%) of total available beds where data are reported
MUNICIPALITY OF SOUFLI	5.425	2.256	7.681	88,3
REGIONAL UNIT OF EVROS	244.885	132.986	377.871	93,3
REGION OF EASTERN MACEDONIA AND THRACE	798.288	1.174.954	1.973.242	86,8

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2019 / Processing: Project team

Tourist arrivals and overnight stays at hotel accommodation facilities of Evros are fluctuating. In particular, during period 2014 – 2015 there was an increase by 3% in tourist arrivals, while in period 2015- 2016 there was a decline at about the same percentage. However, in period 2017 there was a satisfactory increase in tourist arrivals at about 8% compared to 2016. On the other hand, overnight stays in hotel accommodation of Evros, were increasing yearly from 2014 to 2017, experiencing the largest increase from 2016 to 2017 (7%).

Table 5. Tourist arrivals to hotel accommodation facilities (excluding campsites), by Regional Unit and Municipality 2014-2017

	2014	2015	2016	2017
MUNICIPALITY OF ALEXANDROUPOLIS	102.233	108.359	105.598	111.712
MUNICIPALITY OF DIDYMOTEICHO	4.888	4.629	4.470	5.227
MUNICIPALITY OF ORESTIADA	17.790	16.434	14.540	15.689
MUNICIPALITY OF SAMOTHRAKI	6.195	5.932	6.322	8.873
MUNICIPALITY OF SOUFLI	2.310	2.284	2.543	2.557
REGIONAL UNIT OF EVROS	133.416	137.638	133.473	144.058
REGION OF EASTERN MACEDONIA AND THRACE	550.722	606.705	605.998	649.015

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2019 / Processing: Project team

Table 6. Overnight stays at hotel accommodation facilities (excluding campsites), by Regional Unit and Municipality, 2014-2017

PLACE	2014	2015	2016	2017
MUNICIPALITY OF ALEXANDROUPOLIS	238.803	247.083	264.817	277.816
MUNICIPALITY OF DIDYMOTEICHO	17.352	14.757	15.342	16.147
MUNICIPALITY OF ORESTIADA	71.309	47.510	45.614	48.257
MUNICIPALITY OF SAMOTHRAKI	19.433	18.675	19.991	27.970
MUNICIPALITY OF SOUFLI	7.300	6.572	7.710	7.681
REGIONAL UNIT OF EVROS	354.197	334.597	353.474	377.871
REGION OF EASTERN MACEDONIA AND THRACE	1.681.590	1.798.036	1.770.206	1.973.242

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2019 / Processing: Project team

Occupancy of hotel accommodation facilities

In 2017, occupancy of the hotel accommodation facilities in the Regional Unit of Evros were quite low. In particular, total occupancy rate stood at 30.8%, with the highest rates were at the municipalities of Alexandroupolis (35.4%) and Orestiada (31.5%). On the other hand, the Municipality of Soufli had very low occupancy percentage (10%).

Table 7. Occupancy rate of hotel accommodation facilities 2017

PLACE	Occupancy rate (%)	Percentage (%) of total available beds where data are reported
MUNICIPALITY OF ALEXANDROUPOLIS	35,4	93,0
MUNICIPALITY OF DIDYMOTEICHO	15,4	100,0
MUNICIPALITY OF ORESTIADA	31,5	95,5
MUNICIPALITY OF SAMOTHRAKI	25,6	91,4
MUNICIPALITY OF SOUFLI	10,1	88,3
REGIONAL UNIT OF EVROS	30,8	93,3
REGION OF EASTERN MACEDONIA AND THRACE	36,8	86,8

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2019 / Processing: Project team

Table 8. Occupancy rate of hotel accommodation facilities (excluding campsites), by Regional Unit and Municipality

PLACE	2014	2015	2016	2017
MUNICIPALITY OF ALEXANDROUPOLIS	29,1	32,6	33,7	35,4
MUNICIPALITY OF DIDYMOTEICHO	16,6	14,0	14,6	15,4
MUNICIPALITY OF ORESTIADA	39,5	27,6	29,7	31,5
MUNICIPALITY OF SAMOTHRAKI	18,8	17,7	19,8	25,6
MUNICIPALITY OF SOUFLI	9,1	8,7	10,2	10,1
REGIONAL UNIT OF EVROS	27,4	27,5	29,0	30,8
REGION OF EASTERN MACEDONIA AND THRACE	34,4	36,3	35,5	36,8

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2019 / Processing: Project team

5.5.4 Tourist visits in archaeological sites and museums

In general, the Regional Unit of Evros has rich **cultural tradition and history**, and there are many touristic sights that are scattered throughout the region. The touristic activity in the region is calculated through the recorded tourist visits to the regional Archaeological sites and museums, such as the Historical Museum of Alexandroupolis, the Byzantine Museum and the Military Museum of Didymoteicho, the Silk Museum of Soufli, the Silk Art Museum, the sanctuary of the great gods in Samothrace.

Picture 35. Historical Museum of Alexandroupolis (external view)



Source: Project team

Picture 36. Historical Museum of Alexandroupolis (internal view)



Source: <https://museumfinder.gr/>

Picture 37. Byzantine Museum of Didymoteicho (internal view)



Source: Project team

Picture 38. Byzantine Museum of Didymoteicho (internal view)



Source: <https://kastropolites.com/>

Picture 39. Military Museum of Didymoteicho (internal view)



Source: Project team

Picture 40. Military Museum of Didymoteicho



Source: Project team

Picture 41. Silk Art Museum of Soufli



Source: Silk Art Museum

The following table presents the available data of tourist visits to museums and archaeological sites during years 2016, 2017 and 2018. According to the recorded data, there was steady increasing tourist visits to the sights of the Regional Unit of Evros, during the examined the period (ELSTAT, 2019).

Table 9. Tourist visits to museums and archaeological sites of the Regional Unit of Evros

	2016	2017	2018
Mesimvria Zone	2.422	1.899	1.220
Archaeological Site of Samothrace	9.863	10.744	11.335
Byzantine Museum of Didymoteicho	-	2.438	1.345
TOTAL	12.285	15.081	13.900

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2019 / Processing: Project team

There is also great level of participation of visitors in popular events, festivals and cultural fairs. The success and massiveness of participation, when achieved, indicates an increased tourist visit trend and demand. Every year thousands of young people from all over the world participate in the Youth Festival of Ardas River, where they camp and spend seven days of relaxation and entertainment. Correspondingly, the youth festivals in Tycherio and Samothraki are attracting lots of young people every year.

6. Analysis and Evaluation of Points of Interest - Presentation of the identity of Points of Interest and their Historical Significance

In the Regional Unit of Evros, there is rich cultural tradition and history, and there are several touristic sights scattered throughout the region. The demand for the tourism product in the field of mild forms of tourism is valued on the basis of their respective market services and supply.

The existence of special tourism infrastructures, as well as the presence of supportive infrastructures of security, healthcare, and communication, are considered as the prerequisites for the development of alternative tourism and consequently for planning and implementing any economic activity.

Special tourism infrastructures are linked to the options and possibilities of diversifying tourism offerings through specialized and thematic services that can enrich the content of a tourist package and greatly change its profile of a simple summer trip to a comprehensive travel, leisure and entertainment experience. A range of activities from excursions, activities, cycling, tours, gastronomy, spa services, etc can change the identity of the original product offered and reach other segments of the tourist market. These are the means of approaching the traveler with individual components of the travel destination and temporarily integrating it into the physical and cultural nature of the area that chooses to spend most of his journey, enriching his memories at the end with different experiences.

Annex II summarizes the most important special tourist infrastructures that together with sights, museums, traditional hostels with local products and cuisine, monuments of the ancient and Byzantine period and places of religious and pilgrimage character complete the primary tourism product of the Regional Unit of Evros.

It is worth pointing out the following special tourist infrastructures:

► Bird watching in the Forest National Park of Dadia

The forest of Dadia is the only habitat in Greece for the reproduction of black vulture (*Aegypius monachus*). It is a rare species of predator that is globally regarded as endangered. They are also rare species of predators, such as the griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) and Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*). There are 36 of the 38 day-old predatory species and is the most important breeding site for the black stork in Greece. The area is a habitat for 24 bat species, as well as for some species of eagles and hawks, rare amphibians and reptiles. A total of 212 species of birds are found, including many rare species such as 9 out of 10 European woodpeckers.

The birds of the forest are a spectacular sight from the watch tower, in an environment of tranquility and rejuvenation. As the streams succeed the peaks, 220 species of birds, 48 species

of birds and 40 already reptiles and amphibians are living at one of the last safe havens in Europe.

In Dadia village there is a visitor information center with photo exhibition and video projection, a small conference room, a cafeteria for up to 120 people, as well as a shop selling souvenirs and local products. From the Information Center, guests are transported by bus to the watchtower, where they have the opportunity to telescope the birds in the feeding area.

► **Ecotourism center of Tychero**

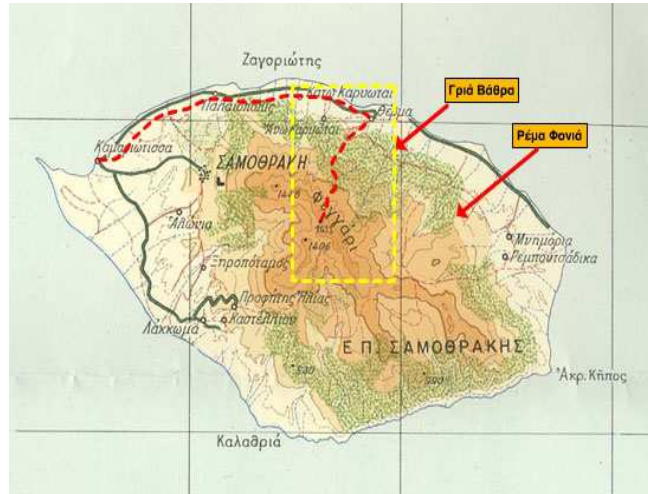
The Ecotourism Center of Tychero is located between two unique ecosystems in Europe, the Delta of Evros river and the Forest of Dadia. The Center is built around the artificial lake of Tychero and is a favorite destination of many visitors and friends of alternative tourism. Lovers of ecotourism can also enjoy plenty of outdoor activities, such as hiking at the 6 signposted routes of different lengths, mountain biking in the forest paths, riding in Dadia, canoe kayak, rafting and sailing in the lake of and Tychero and also 4X4 vehicle tours especially in Pomak villages.

► **Hiking in Samothraki**

Samothraki is ideal for hiking as it has the famous route to Mount Moon (or Saos) which covers most of the island area. This route, despite its high altitude of 1.570m, is not very tiring but also not easy. The last part of the route is quite rocky and difficult and requires experience in mountain hiking. Along the route and at the top of the mountain, there is an excellent view of the Aegean Sea.

The route is well signposted and as it shown at Picture 42, there are red markings on the hiking map that ensure a smooth ride even with fog which is common especially in the morning and during the summer. The total time for this route is approximately ten hours, including return. The temperature at the top of the mountain is lower than 11 degrees below sea level and that if it has wind, it will be very cold even in summer.

Picture 42. Hiking route to Moon mountain in Samothraki

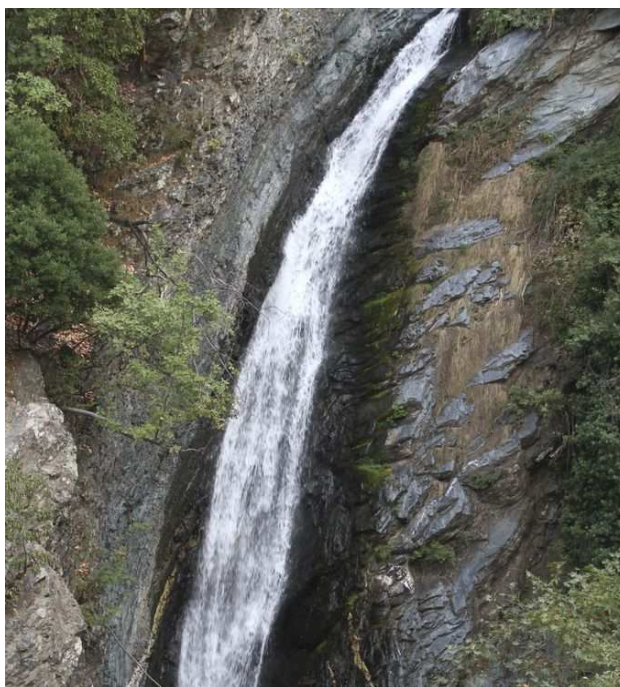


Source: <http://www.pezoporia.gr/>

It is also worth visiting the two paths that run along the waterfalls where tourists can swim in the little lakes (“Vathres”). The first route is west of Therma village to “Gria Vathra” and the second is at the stream of Fonia, which located 4 km west of Therma village. These routes are very interesting because of the waterfalls and the opportunity to swim in the little lakes (“Vathres”).

- «Gria Vathra»: In the Therma region, in a beautiful landscape full of centuries-old plane trees and ferns there are little lakes and small waterfalls that are formed successively by the waterfall that starts from the mountain Saos.
- «Vathres tou Fonia»: Hiking in an area that is like a fairyland by the stream of Fonia, which is the most famous river of Samothraki. It springs from the peaks of Mount Saos and flows northeast of Samothraki into the Thracian Sea. The water, falling from a height of 20 meters, forms carved waterfalls. The largest but also definitely the most beautiful is called Fonias (murderer in Greek), which is so called because of the danger of its rushing waters. The Fonias hiking trail is easy, especially up the first step. The most beautiful and impressive point of Fonias, however, is Klidosi which is a waterfall of 35 meters high. Finally, below the beach there is the homonymous medieval tower, among the plane trees.

Picture 43. Fonias waterfall



Source: <https://greece.terrabook.com/>

Until summer of 2000, these trails were completely unregulated, and in some places, they were passing dangerous points, resulting in several accidents and usually serious ones. These streams are usually crossed from top to bottom only with by using ropes and other climbing equipment.

► **Motocross track in Kastania, Evros**

In Kastania of Evros there is a motocross track, next to the river Evros. As part of the events of the Young Festival of Ardas river and the AMOTOE Games, are organized official motocross races in the Municipal District of Kastanies, in Vissa Municipality.

► **Thermal baths of Traianoupolis**

Thermal baths of Traianoupolis have been a major attraction since ancient times. The old baths consist of two vaulted 16th-century buildings, each with a storage tank and changing rooms. The construction of the new baths began in 1962 and completed in 1964. Located in the historic site of Traianoupolis, on the National Road, 14 km away from Alexandroupolis, heading towards the Greek-Turkish border. They are currently managed by the Thermal Bath Company of Alexandroupolis.

Thermal bath facilities use energy from the hot water for the heating, and there is a hydrotherapy spa with 15 bathtubs and 7 hydromassage bathtubs.

Moreover, there are also a Hotel, a Mini Market and a Restaurant operated by the Female Productive Cooperative of Loutros.

► Thermal Baths of Samothraki

In the region of Therma in the northern part of the Samothraki island there are outbursts of thermo-mineral waters, known for their healing characteristics since the Byzantine period. The Municipal Hydrotherapeutic Center, which utilizes the thermal baths “Psarotherma”, is located on a 5,000 sq.m. location and has 13 individual and 2 group pool baths (men and women). The water in the pools is clear, salty, has a hydrogen sulfide odor, its temperature is around 38° -39° C and is recommended for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, chronic arthropathy, dermatopathy, chronic gynecological inflammation, bone disease. Next to the baths there are lukewarm taps ideal for dinking, as it is recommended for obesity, but also for liver, bile and kidney diseases. Near the stream is another source with drinking water that can be use as a laxative.

The vapor coming out of the drilling mud next to the municipal thermal bath building is recommended for inhalation (upper respiratory tract inflammation). In the surrounding area going up the road to the “Psarotherma” hill there is an outdoor trough. Its water is not clear and has enough sulfur at a constant temperature of 37°- 38°C and it is suitable for bone and skin diseases, as well as it is used for foot baths (it has no entrance ticket).

On the other side of the island, after a particularly difficult and tiring route, there is the very cold Thermal Source Sfindami.

Annex II also includes specific thematic activities related to agrotourism, Wellness and Spa tourism, and other alternative forms of tourist, which have been successfully promoted nowadays by special tourist packages.

These activities are organized by travel agencies and clubs either as separate tourism packages, or additional services to already offered packages, enriching the character of the tourist product and diversifying it, helping in attracting new segments of the international tourism market (AMTH, 2015)

The natural and cultural capital of the Regional Unit of Evros, combined with the morphology and terrain of the inland and coastal areas, is an important factor for the development of specific forms of tourism, as it provides a variety of options and places where these activities can take place.

7. Presentation of the traditional cuisine and analysis and evaluation of traditional culinary resources in Evros

The main occupation of the residents in the Regional Unit of Evros is the cultivation of land and the production of agricultural products such as winter cereals, cotton, sunflower, maize, sugar beet, alfalfa, asparagus and garlic. Livestock and especially sheep and goat breeding, is the second most important occupation in Evros (Manousides 2012).

In Evros, local products are mainly used in traditional cuisine such as cereals, vegetables, legumes, meat, as well as fish and seafood caught in the Thracian Sea.

In the past, the food in Evros was simple and made from locally produced products. In summer, the base of the food was the vegetables. In winter and after Christmas, when pigs were slaughtered, preserved meat was an essential part of the local diet. Today's regional cuisine and gastronomy of Evros is a unique blend of ingredients and herbs from recipes from Konstantinoupolis, East Thrace and Asia Minor, combined with Mediterranean cuisine.

The existence of two separate territorial units, each with its own distinctive features, also has an impact on the local cuisine. The northern part of Evros is mostly flat, with plenty of water and the becomes mountainous in its northern part. The most common products in North Evros are: sunflower, corn, garlic, asparagus, legumes, wine, sausages, dairy. South Evros is characterized by the coastal area, the forest of Dadia and the Delta of Evros river and its traditional products are: silk, asparagus, melon, wine, sausages, dairies, olives and olive oil

Throughout the Regional Unit of Evros there are typical products such as “kavourmas”, sausages, tsipouro, ouzo, wine, goat cheese, ariani, trachanas, while the local products of Evros are used to in traditional recipes such as “Babo”, “minilaki”, “golio”, “Thracian “langites”, Thracian sardines, vegetable with meat, “Barbara”, Thracian salty milk pie, pork with “couscous-kiskiki”, yogurt pie, “retselli” (typical spoon sweet, zucchini, walnut), etc.

In recent years there have been many coffee shops that support local products by having special designed exhibition of these products which are for selling.

7.1 Food

A typical winter delicacy in Evros is “Kavourmas”. Kavourmas used to be made from roasted pork meat that was put in tanks with fat. Today it is prepared by butchers and enters in a large pork intestines. It is considered as an ideal accompaniment to ouzo and beer varieties.

Kavourmas is a traditional Greek meat product that is found throughout Thrace and eastern Macedonia. It looks a bit thick, but with a more compact texture and a little jelly. It has cylindrical shape with 20-30cm length and 4-9cm width. It is sold either in large or packaged in small pieces.

There are four different flavors, characterized by the type of meat used. Low-fat beef, high-fat sheep but highly concentrated, mixed with pork and beef, spicy with leek and various spices.

Kavourmas

Ingredients:

- 1 kg of beef meat*
- 1 kg pork meat*
- 1 kg of goat meat*
- 1 intestine of beef*
- 1/4 fat*
- 1-2 leeks*
- 1 teaspoon pepper*
- 1 teaspoon oregano*
- 1 tablespoon salt*



EXECUTION

Boil all the meat with salt. Chop them and cut into small pieces. Pour the leek, oregano, pepper into the almost melted meat and boil for another ½ hour. When it is still hot, the intestine is filled and tightened. When it cools down a bit and it is put in the fridge to freeze so it can be sliced.

Kavourmas is served either in small cubes, mainly accompanied with ouzo or tsipouro, red wine. It becomes more tasty if is left to dry for a few minutes. It is an original appetizer if it will be fried in the pan or baked in the oven, or served onto bread slices. It is cooked in the pan or in the oven with eggs, pasta, potatoes, pulses (such as beans flavored with orange peel and cumin seeds).

Kavourmas with eggs

Ingredients:

1-2 slices of buffalo kavourmas
1-2 tbsp. olive oil or butter
1 green horn pepper, cut into slices
a little bit of red pepper
a pinch of salt
1 tsipouro shot
2 eggs



EXECUTION

Heat the oil or butter in a frying pan and sauté the pepper until it withers. Add the boxwood. Break the crab with the fork and add it. Stir, add some salt and quench with the tsipouro. Open a nest in the center and carefully lay the eggs inside. Salt the eggs and bake at 180 degrees as needed.

"Babo" is a Christmas dish, necessary complement to the Christmas table. It consists of pork intestine stuffed with chopped meat (nowadays is used minced meat), pieces of liver, rice, chopped leek and spices. It was cooked in a clay pot or in wide racks. Today it is cooked in shallow earthen pot called "juvetzi".

Traditionally it has been named after Babo, which means grandmother in greek. Just as grandmother is old and heading towards the end of life, so does Babo is eaten at the end of the year. Alternatively, its name was given by its main ingredient, the pig intestine, which is the "ending" of the animal. The pork was slaughtered on Christmas Eve. The intestines of the animal were cleansed, washed, and kept in vinegar and water solution».

Babo

Ingredients:

1 kg liver pieces

1/4 minced beef

2 leeks

2 onions

1 cup of rice

2 cups of flour (optional)

little salt, little oregano, little spice, little lemon

cumin and red pepper

black pepper

1 glass of water

4 intestines (pork)



EXECUTION

Wash the intestines with plenty of water. Put them in vinegar for 1 hour and then rinse with water. Wash the offal and put them in boiling water for a little while (boil it). Remove and chop them. Put the offal in a bowl of leeks, rice, minced meat, sprinkle with salt, oregano and spice and knead well. Take a funnel and fill the intestines with it. Tie them to the edges with a twine. Cook them at a low heat and pierce them with a fork, put them in a pan with a little water and oil and bake them in the oven for 1 hour on low heat.

Petura or joufkadis (pasta): Thick pie sheet made with rolling pin, from dough which was made of flour, water, milk and eggs. The leaf was cut into thin pieces, which were dried in the sun and stored in special bags.

Bliguri (Boulgour): Boiled fine grain (like the ones made in water), dried in the sun and broken in the hand mill. It was cooked either alone (like pilaf) or with various meats. It was delicious with chicken.

Pickled cabbage: It is a Thracian way of preserving the cabbage that tastes amazing in the brine and is used either directly in salad or in cooking. During the preparation period, the cabbage is put in the brine. Cabbage takes 10 days to a month to become pickle, depending on the ambient temperature. If there is a hurry it can be put in some lukewarm water and stored in a warm environment. Otherwise, if it will be left out in the winter its preparation process will probably last longer than a month.

The Thracian Sea area around Alexandroupolis and the estuary of Evros river is surprisingly rich in fish. For this reason, there is a great variety of fish dishes and seafood in fish taverns, as well as in the fish whole sale market, which is one of the largest in Greece. The most beloved Alexandroupolis fish are lanterns, lobster, mullet, sardines and large barley prawns. Nowadays, sturgeons are rarely used. They used to take their eggs for making caviar.

Due to Evros river, freshwater fish are widespread in the area and they are particularly tasty. The meadow here is called "sasani", "gulianos" which the largest predatory river fish, can reach 30 kg, while the bass and "kokkinofters" of Evros are extremely tasty if they will be grilled or fried. Eggs are made from sasani and gulianos and they become wonderful caviar – balls

Other famous local specialties are: **kolbourek (wrapped pie), kioul (chicken soup and flour porridge), trachana, tarator (tzatziki).**

7.2 Sweets

"Barbara", which is a characteristic sweet of Thrace, seems to have its origin in some doctrines. Specifically, it was once believed that St. Barbara was wandering around at night to cure people from pox. Furthermore, people used to put lime in the fireplaces and burn it when there was an epidemic of this disease. So, they used to put a plate of "Barbara" sweet close to the fireplace for St. Barbara.

According to tradition, when the Turks wanted to exterminate the Christian population, they decided to poison the flour. St. Barbara appeared, warned the Christians, and showed to them how to make "Barbara" by using wheat for a few days. When the Turks saw that the Christians had not died, they were afraid and did not disturb them again. Since then, it is a tradition to prepare "Barbara" on the feast day of St. Barbara (December 4). Barbara's custom revives at the Historical Folklore Museum of Orestiada every year on December 4th and is attended by elementary schools.

The cooking of Barbara has many archaic elements and is like the "panspermia" of the ancient Greeks; as they used wheat, almonds, raisins, nuts. What is more, it was believed that if Barbara became white, it would snow.

Barbara

Ingredients:

1 kg of wheat
500 g dried grapes
250 g Sesame
½ cup sugar
6-7 figs
1 quince
1 apple



EXECUTION

Put 5 cups of water in the pot and set on fire. Then, pour the wheat and sesame seeds and let it boil for 1 hour. Remove from the pot from the heat, let it cold and then serve with raisins, figs, quince and apple.

In Evros, people make “**Lagites**” (or **lalagites**) which is a sparse dough (similar to crepes). This sweet was usually eaten with oil or sugar. In other places of Evros Lagites are made almost like donuts with the same mixture, while in Lagites are made thin as crepes.

Lagites

Ingredients:

3 Eggs
1 Liter of milk
1 pinch of salt
1 kg of flour



EXECUTION

In a bowl put the eggs, milk, a pinch of salt, the flour and mix them with a mixer. Once mixture is coated, put the remaining milk to dilute the mixture. Then allow the mixture to rise. After bloating, put it in a

hot pan. Pour a tablespoon of the mixture into the pan and just turn it red on one side. Repeat this until the mixture is finished. At the end we serve the Lagites with honey, vitamin or jam or plenty of sugar, nuts and cinnamon.

“**Mikikia**” is a traditional sweet of Evros. It looks like donuts but its dough is tighter and it has a hole in the middle. Traditionally, **Mikikia** was sweetened with sugar or honey and cinnamon.

Mikikia

Ingredients:

2 ½ glasses of lukewarm water
1 kg of flour
40 - 5g. yeast
1 tablespoon of honey
1 teaspoon of salt



EXECUTION

Dissolve yeast, honey and salt in lukewarm water. Add flour and knead the Ingredients until they are well blended, with no lumps in the dough. Dough should be soft enough. Otherwise add little water (lukewarm). Let the dough rise in a warm place. When the dough has risen, put the oil in a saucepan and let it burn well. Then, take a small piece of dough and shape it the same way it the famous meatballs are made. Make a hole in the middle and as it is swung to make the opening larger, put it into the hot oil. Fry all Mikikia and serve it hot mainly with honey.

In many places of Evros “**Vassilopita**” is a cheese pie and instead of a coin it has inside various things (e.g. bean, sprig, raisin, cheese, etc). It is eaten in the evening of New Year's Eve and is shared with family members. Each member depending on the

piece he or she receives, will have the same duties during the new year (e.g. one will be responsible for the vineyard, another for the animals, etc).

Vassilopita

Ingredients:

4-5 Eggs

¼ Cheese

¼ Mizithra cheese

¼ Oil

¼ Milk

1 kg of flour

½ Glass of water

1 tablespoon of salt

½ spoonful of sweet birch

¼ butter



EXECUTION

Put in a bowl: the flour, the birch, the water, the salt and the oil. Knead them and then allow the dough to rise for a while. Then, once the dough is done, open the mixture. Then, smear the pan with butter. Add 3 sheets of cheese, oil and Mizithra cheese. Then, 2 pieces before the end, put the marks in each part of the pan. Then we put the pieces that were left over and we put the eggs and milk on top. Finally, bake at 130 degrees for 30 minutes.

Other **traditional sweets** offered in Evros are: Yogurt Pie, "Ritseli", "krana", "kourabiedes", "Katsamaki" (Boiled Corn Flour), "Baklava", "Karidaki", "Ariani", liquer wine.

7.3 Traditional cuisine of Samothraki island

In Samothraki, the most famous dish is goat meat, and other dishes are:

- Manti (roasted pork mince and pie with rice stuffing),
- Gorgovrasto with pilaf (boiled big animal meat and rice with milk),
- Lioto (red meat with melted nuts),
- Haslamas (halvas in the pan)
- Sour Trachanas,
- Gorgi (seven kinds of nuts with chickpeas),
- Lambirgiats or lambriatis (easter meat with goat or lamb with its belly stuffed with rice, chives, dill, raisins, boiled liver, baked in the oven),
- Zmaropatou (fasting pie with flour, oil and stuffing with grated zucchini and mint),
- Xortopita (pie with vegetables)
- Xilopites (pasta stuffed with sweet potatoes, lentils and poppies),
- Kormpanoudi (goat or lamb baked in the oven)

Manti

Ingredients:

½ kg of minced meat

1 Fresh onion grated

some salt

1 cup water

butter, oil

pepper,

parsley

1 sweet spoon of semolina

1 egg (we keep the yolk for smearing the muffin before going into the oven, with a little seed oil



EXECUTION

Boil the minced meat with onions, salt and water. When the liquids are over, pour the butter, lightly squeeze and then add the oil, pepper, and the rest after you have removed the pan from the heat.

Knead the flour with a little salt, oil and water. Open 2 sheets, not minutes. Cut each leaf into squares of about 10x10 cm. Put one tablespoon on each square, unite the four edges, push the openings together and flip it over and put it in the pan and so on. It will take about 60-70 minutes. When filled, blend with the yolk and olive oil and bake it at 200 degrees.

When it comes out of the oven, cover with 2 cups. teaspoon meat broth, cover them with another baking pan and after one hour turn them upside down.

Kormpanoudi

Ingredients:

- 1 stale bread
- 3 kg lamb
- 1 liver
- 1 cup. butter
- 3 onions
- 1 cup of mint
- 2-3 spinach roots
- 1 spinch of red pepper for the meat
- 1 spinch black pepper
- 1 spinch of mint
- 1 spinch of salt
- 1 spinch of sweet red pepper
- 2 liters of water
- 1 kg milk



EXECUTION

Slice the meat into pieces according to the portions we want, salt and pepper and place in a pan, pour the mint, butter and water and put in the oven.

Bake it at 180 degrees.

Cut bread into batches and put in the oven to bake a little. Wash the liver, scald it, cut it into pieces, sauté it and finally sprinkle with chopped spring onion, mint, spinach and pepper, stirring for a little longer.

Add the lukewarm milk and the juice left in the baking pan with the bits of bread.

Then take the roasted meat and place it over the lid upside down so that the roasted side is below. Cover with the bowl and put it back in the oven until lightly browned.

Many **traditional recipes** can be found even today in Samothrace. Parsley lamb, Capamas with quinces, Ifkadia souffle, Stuffed lamb, Roasted chicken, Chicken with pickles, Chicken with lamb, Kourbani with lamb, Lalagites with chicken, Lachanodolmades kapama, Mpourani, Pie with Onions, Beans with Pickled Cabbage, Tsigerosarmades, Boumbari, etc.

Prassotsourvas

Ingredients:

- 2 leeks (chop them)*
- 1 cup oil*
- 1 cup rice*
- 2 bunches of onions*
- 1 / 2 liter of water a little mint*



EXECUTION

Chop leeks and onion tops.

Save them in the oil and pour the water.

Once boiled, pour the rice.

At the end we pour the mint.

Melt flour with water, pour it into the saucepan, stir with the spoon to make the soup and add a little vinegar.

The sweet dishes we find in Samothraki are Haslamas, sweet milkpie, Halvas “liugu-liugu”, Saragli with sesam.

Haslamas

Ingredients

500g flour for all uses

175g coarse semolina

1 box sweet baking powder

150g sugar

1 cup olive oil

1 cognac shot

1 cup mixed walnuts and almonds in a thick paste

Shave 2 oranges

1 box sweet cinnamon

¼ box. sweet grated cloves

1 box sweet-bodied soda

For the syrup

600g of sugar

½ liter of water

½ lemon

5-6 cloves

1 cinnamon stick

2 boxes. soup of honey

1 cup orange juice



EXECUTION

Heat the oven to 180 ° C.

Mix all Ingredients in a bowl until the last two and dissolve in the orange juice and soda. Add the foam mixture to the pan. Stir the Ingredients in a wooden spoon until we have homogeneous dough that will stick a little in the hand.

Lubricate the pan and spread in the mixture, pressing with our palm to make it thick and not exceeding one inch thick in the pan.

Scrape the surface of the sweet into rhombus and if desired we place in the center of each of a piece of almond or walnut. Bake in preheated oven for 50 minutes until lightly browned.

Meanwhile prepare the syrup by putting in a small saucepan the water with the sugar, the cinnamon cloves, the lemon juice and the peel which we cut on the surface. Stir in the sugar first to dissolve and then boil the syrup for 5 minutes. Turn off the heat and dissolve the honey in the syrup. Keep the syrup warm.

Refrigerate the sweet and after 10 minutes syrup it with syrup by pouring it with a spoon. Allow it to absorb and cool or become lukewarm at least before serving.

Dishes related to customs and celebrations:

- Calf head at Christmas
- Kihia of New Year's Eve (pie)
- Salty milk pie
- Dry Pie
- Kapamas at Easter
- Tsitsilato at Easter
- Katafiotiko (summer)
- Meatballs with onions in the oven
- Rice pie made by the bride on the third day of the Sunday of her wedding
- Kapamas with plums at weddings and celebrations,
- Onion stuffed with minced meat in engagements and weddings
- Quince stuffed with minced meat (wedding food),
- Rouftenio bread



Finally, it is worth mentioning the traditional sweet of the spoon of Samothraki which is the “**praousti**” or “**praousto**”. It is fruit that thrives on the island and is so named because it appears and matures before August. It is a tree fruit, something between a rapeseed and a plum.

Praousti” or “Praousto” Sweet spoon

Ingredients:

2kg of Praousti (yellow plums)

1700 g sugar

2 sachets of vanilla sugar

juice of 2 lemons

4 glasses of water

For lime

2 tbsp. lime

2 liters of water



EXECUTION

Wash thoroughly and peel the ingredients.

Cut them out with a nail or cut them in the middle and cut them out by twisting each half piece in the opposite direction.

Fill a pan with water and pour the juice of a lemon.

Put the garlic in it until it boils so that it does not get a dark color.

In a large bowl, put the lime and fill with water, which should cover our fruit.

Leave them in the lime for 30 minutes and then gently remove with a spoonful and place in a strainer.

Wash them very well and plenty of water under the tap with running water and allow them to drain.

Put 4 cups of water in the saucepan with the sugar and allow the syrup to boil over medium heat for 5-6 minutes, measuring the time it starts to thicken.

Then, gently dip our fruits and let them simmer over medium heat for 15 minutes.

If necessary, carefully and gently remove the foam formed.

Just before we remove the sweet from the heat, add the 2 sachets of flavored sugar and lemon juice.

Allow another sweet to boil and remove the pot from the heat.

Leave it in the pan, preferably without closing the lid but with a sieve over it (such as the one we put on the pan to prevent it from burning) for 24 hours so that it "gets out" of its liquids.

The next day we boil it again until our syrup binds.

Usually 10 minutes is enough.

If, when we put a little syrup on a cold plate, the drop does not lose its shape then our syrup is very well knit, so the sweet will not sweeten or mold.

Put the warm sweet into sterile jars, close them and place them upside down on a towel until they cool.

Keep them in a cool and dark place.

Check if the center of the lid is pressed inward and the jars are not pressed tightly.

If the center of the lid is pressed inward then either keep the sweet in the refrigerator or sterilize the jar again to close it tightly.

7.4 Other local food products

Garlic of Nea Vissa

Nea Vissa is a village located on the fertile plain of the river Evros and in the north eastern part of the prefecture. Nea Vissa is the largest cultivated area of garlic in Greece. Garlic has

D3.2.1: Study of integrated methodology for cultural, natural sites and traditional gastronomy in Evros

been cultivated since 1923, which is the year the village was founded. The soil climatic conditions of the region contribute to the production of excellent quality garlic. Garlic has a very rich aromatic potential and is white in color with purple iridescence.

In 2009, was established in Nea Vissa the first Agricultural Garlic Cooperative in Greece with the aim of organizing the production of its members, standardizing, processing and marketing the product. The cooperative owns an excellent line of sorting, processing and packaging as well as cold storage for product storage, achieving a higher quality of garlic, which is certified by the standard Global G.A.P quality management systems Agro 2-1 and Agro 2-2.

Today the cooperative has 35 member- producers, producing about 1.200 tons of dried garlic per year, while the village produces about 4.000 tons in total.

Olive oil of Nea Makri

Olive oil of Nea Makri is considered one of the best in the world, as evidenced by the continuous analysis by various laboratories and international awards in all competitions. Its aromatic profile includes aromatic herbs, characteristic cappuccino scent, spicy notes, while it is sweet and fruity with apple peel aroma. This combination is unique and characteristic of the local olive variety of Makri, Alexandroupolis.

7.5 Women's cooperatives of Evros

In Evros there are several agricultural production cooperatives and women's associations.

The **Women's Agro-tourist Cooperative of Trigono** was founded in 1998 under the name "Gaia" where they produce kouskous, ifkadia, uomats, ritseli, liqueur, traditional handmade leaves and pies, forest fruit jams. Gaia Cooperative is one of the pioneers in experimenting with producing new types of the same product.

A representative sample is the different types of pasta with differentiation or variation of one or more ingredients in the already existing recipe, with the most typical product being the trachanas with the following variant:

- Fruity trachanas (with various fruits)
- Trachanas with green vegetables (broccoli spinach, leek, parsley, etc.)
- Trachanas with single-grain wheat flour
- Hilopites with spinach, carrot etc.τ

- Hilopites, trachanas, and Kouskous with wheat flour - an ancient variety - also known as Zea, gluten free - or products lactose free.

The **Women's Agro-Tourist Cooperative of Peplo**, founded in 1996 under the name "Akritisses". Its purpose is to employ its members in the canteen of the Customs Office of Kipoi and in the canteen the region of the Peplo. Its aim is to promote its handmade canned products such as: sweets, trachanas, Kouskous, jams & compotes. However, the main objective of the cooperative is the economic-social and cultural development of the female rural population as well as the social - economic development of the region.

The **Women's Cooperative of Loutra** named "Hana" which produces traditional food products. It operates as a restaurant-canteen near the thermal baths of Trajanoupolis.

The **Women's Cooperative of Feres**, founded in 1996 under the name "Ekavi". In the workshop of the Cooperative in Feres, the visitor can taste a wide variety of spoon sweets and Thracian pasta (hilopites, Kouskous, roasted red (vegetable), Trachanas white, etc.) All food products are made with love, caring for women with traditional recipes learned from their grandmothers, with pure, quality and of course delicious ingredients.

The **Women's Rural Cooperative of Lefkimi** produces traditional sweets and traditional local recipes.

The **Women's Cooperative of Samothraki** was founded in 2002 under the name "Axiokersa", is based in Kamariotissa. It produces dishes such as floramaria, trachanas, spoon sweets, aromatic herbs, liqueurs, olive oil and olives.

The **Women's Agro-Tourist Cooperative of Aisimi**, was founded in 2004 and consists of 9 members. It operates a traditional tavern located in Aisimi and offers traditional dishes such as: kilintiria, goat meat, kneaded bread, legumes, baking and spoon sweets, jams. Moreover, pasta, such as gioufkades and trachanas, are the special dishes of the Rural Cooperative.

Bibliography

Greek

Ανδρέα Β., (2013), Η στάση των εμπλεκόμενων φορέων για μια αποτελεσματική διαχείριση για την προστασία και ανάδειξη προστατευόμενων περιοχών του Ν. Έβρου, Ορεσιτιάδα: ΔΠΘ

Γιαννακίδου, Α. (2001), Νόστιμος Έβρος. Δημοσυνεταιριστική Εταιρεία Έβρος Α.Ε.

Δημοσυνεταιριστική Έβρος ΑΕ, (2016), Πρόταση Υποβολής Σχεδίου Τοπικού Προγράμματος CLLD / LEADER (Φάκελος Α), Σουφλί

Ε.Υ.Δ.Ε.Π.-Π.Α.Μ.Θ. (2015), Στρατηγικό & Επιχειρησιακό Σχέδιο Τουριστικής Ανάπτυξης Περιφέρειας Α.Μ.Θ.

Ηγουμενάκης Ν., Κραβαρίτης Κ. & Λύτρας Π. (1999), Εισαγωγή στον Τουρισμό, Αθήνα: INTERBOOKS

Λιόντου Ν., (2010), Πολιτιστικοί Σύλλογοι, λαογραφικές συλλογές και λαογραφικά μουσεία στο Νομό Έβρου, Θεσσαλονίκη: ΑΠΘ

Μανουσίδης, Θ. (2012). Συγκριτική μελέτη τριών συστημάτων εκτροφής προβάτων στο Βόρειο Έβρο. Μεταπτυχιακή εργασία ειδίκευσης ΠΜΣ «Αειφορικά Συστήματα Παραγωγής και Περιβάλλον στη Γεωργία». Τμήμα Αγροτικής Ανάπτυξης, Δ.Π.Θ., Ορεσιτιάδα

Τσολακίδης Ν., (2017), Οι δυνατότητες ανάπτυξης της Π.Ε. Έβρου ως προορισμού εναλλακτικών μορφών τουρισμού, Πάτρα: ΕΑΠ

Bell S., Tyrväinen L., Sievänen T., Pröbstl U. & Simpson M. (2007), Outdoor recreation and nature tourism: A European perspective. Living Reviews in Landscape Research 1 (2), 1 46.

Websites

Information on Sightseeing in Evros

<http://alternatrips.gr/>

<http://art-hellas.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.e-evros.gr/>

<http://www.evros-delta.gr>

<http://www.inevros.gr>

<http://www.koukoulihotel.gr/>

<http://www.mikridoxipara-zoni.gr>

<http://www.peevrou.eu/index.php/menu-tourismos/menu-tourismos-4>

<http://www.samothraki-tourism.gr>

<https://dadia-np.gr>

<https://el.wikipedia.org>

<https://greece.terrabook.com/el/evros/chapter/aksiotheata-politismou/>

<https://kastropolites.com>

<https://museumfinder.gr/>

<https://novoscriptorium.com/>

<https://samothraki.gr>

<https://www.archaiologia.gr/>

<https://www.culture.gr>

<https://www.Didymoteicho.gr>

<https://www.emtgreece.com>

<https://www.in.gr/>

<https://www.visitthraki.gr/>

<https://www.wwf.gr>

<https://www.xronos.gr/>

Information on archaeological site visits and existing tourist accommodation facilities in Evros

www.statistics.gr

Annexes

Annex I. Most Important environmental and cultural resources in the Regional Unit of Evros

Annex II. Most Important Tourist Infrastructure and Alternative Tourism Activities in the Regional Unit of Evros

Annex III. Application form for cultural bodies