GUIDE · CORINTHIA

Zacholi & Evrostina: The Fairytale Forest of Corinthia



About

Zacholi: The Grand Dame of Mountainous Corinthia

On the slopes of mountainous Corinthia, at an altitude reaching 750 metres, lies one of the most atmospheric and historic destinations in the Peloponnese: Evrostina, widely known by its traditional name, Zacholi. It is a village that seems to have emerged from the pages of a folk fairytale, combining the wild beauty of the forest with the tranquillity of running waters and the imposing architecture of stone-built houses.

Zacholi is not just a destination for a quick getaway; it is a sensory experience. The route winding up from Derveni or Lykoporia prepares the visitor for what is to come: an amphitheatrical layout with breath-taking views toward the Corinthian Gulf, lush vegetation, and air that smells of pine and fir. Historically, the village was one of the most important centres in the region, experiencing great prosperity in the past, which is reflected to this day in its mansions and grand churches. Whether you are looking for a cooling retreat in the summer or a snowy sanctuary in the winter, this village remains one of Corinthia's most authentic treasures.

The Stream of the Mills: A Natural Setting That Charms

The trademark of Evrostina and the main reason thousands of travellers visit every year is the famous "Rema ton Milon" (The Stream of the Mills). This is a natural ravine that crosses the village, which has been landscaped with absolute respect for the environment, offering a route of unique beauty. The gurgling of the water is the constant companion of the walker as the stream descends impetuously from the mountains toward the coast.

This "oasis of nature and coolness," as many call it, is the perfect spot for relaxation and photography. The

path is well-maintained and allows visitors to immerse themselves in a landscape that feels far removed from the modern world. It is particularly popular during the summer months when the coastal heat becomes intense, as the temperature here is significantly lower thanks to the shade and the water.

What You Will See at the Stream of the Mills:

- **Small Waterfalls and Ponds:** The water forms successive waterfalls that end in crystal-clear ponds, where you will often see ducks swimming leisurely. These small aquatic mirrors reflect the green canopy above, creating a magical atmosphere.
- **Wooden Bridges:** The route is full of picturesque wooden bridges that connect the banks of the stream, ideal for photos and moments of quiet contemplation.
- **Plane Trees and Dense Vegetation:** Enormous, centuries-old plane trees offer their shade even on the hottest summer days, creating a cool microclimate that rejuvenates the body and spirit.
- **Old Watermills:** As its name suggests, the area once bustled with life thanks to the watermills that harnessed the power of the stream. Today, their ruins add a note of nostalgia to the landscape, reminding us of the village's industrious past.

The tour of the Stream of the Mills is easy and accessible for all ages, making it an ideal activity for families with children or for those seeking a peaceful contact with nature without significant physical exertion. There are several spots along the way where you can sit and enjoy the sounds of the forest.

The Historic Church of Agios Georgios

In the heart of Zacholi stands one of the most impressive churches in Corinthia and all of Greece: Agios Georgios (Saint George). Built in 1811, this church is an architectural masterpiece featuring 17 domes, which symbolize Christ, the 12 Apostles, and the 4 Evangelists. Its unique silhouette against the mountain backdrop is one of the most photographed spots in the region.

According to tradition, the residents managed to build the church in just 39 days after receiving permission from the Ottoman authorities on the condition that it be completed within forty days. Its architecture, with its many windows and domes, creates a unique play of light inside. In the church courtyard, you can see the monument to the Zacholi fighters, as the village played an active role in the Greek Revolution. The interior is equally stunning, featuring a gold-plated iconostasis and intricate hagiographies that reflect the religious art of the era.

Exploring the Forest of Evrostina

Zacholi is surrounded by one of the densest and most beautiful forests in Corinthia. The forest of Evrostina consists mainly of black pine, firs, and cedars, offering countless opportunities for hiking and exploration. The mountainous routes connect the village with other settlements in the area, such as Karya and the villages of Pellini.

For adventure lovers, there are trails that lead to higher points of the mountain, offering panoramic views of the entire prefecture and the blue waters of the Corinthian Gulf in the distance. The landscape changes dramatically depending on the season: from the deep green and cool summer to the golden shades of autumn and the white, snowy scenery of winter. The forest is also home to rich fauna, and lucky hikers might spot local bird species or small mammals characteristic of the Peloponnesian highlands.

Panagia ton Katafygion: A Monument on the Edge of the Cliff

Just outside Zacholi, it is worth visiting Panagia ton Katafygion (Our Lady of the Shelters). This is a small chapel literally perched on the rock, in a location that inspires awe. Its name comes from the "katafygia," the caves in the rock where residents sought refuge to protect themselves during raids during the Ottoman

period.

The view from Panagia ton Katafygion toward the valley and the sea is breathtaking. While the ascent requires a bit of attention, the energy of the site and the beauty of the landscape more than reward the visitor. It is a place of profound silence and spiritual significance, standing as a testament to the resilience of the local people throughout history.

Practical Information for Your Visit

Accessing Zacholi is straightforward via the Athens-Patras National Road. You will take the exit for Derveni and from there follow the signs toward Evrostina. The uphill journey takes about 15-20 minutes and is full of bends, but the road surface is in good condition and the views along the way are spectacular.

When to Go and What to Expect

- **Best Time to Visit:** Zacholi is a year-round destination. Summer offers a cool escape from the heat, autumn brings vibrant colours, and winter is perfect for those who love the cozy mountain atmosphere and the possibility of snow.
- **What to Wear:** Even in summer, the temperature is lower than on the coast, so a light jacket is recommended. In winter, be prepared with heavy clothing, as the village can experience quite a chill. If you plan to hike the Stream of the Mills, comfortable walking shoes or sneakers are essential.
- **Local Flavours:** Don't leave without trying the local cuisine in the village taverns. The area is famous for its traditional pasta (hylopites), grilled meats, and local honey. Many taverns are located near the stream, allowing you to dine to the sound of rushing water.
- **Nearby Excursions:** You can combine your visit with a trip to the traditional villages of Pellini and Karya, or head down to the coast of Lykoporia and Derveni for a swim if the weather permits. For a longer road trip, consider following the route through the traditional villages of Corinthia, including Stimanga, Klimenti, and Kastania.

Zacholi (Evrostina) remains a place where time slows down. It is a destination that rewards the traveller who seeks authenticity, natural beauty, and a deep connection with the history of the Corinthian land. Whether you are crossing a wooden bridge over the stream or standing under the 17 domes of Agios Georgios, you will feel the unique magic of this mountain village.

More: the Evrostina – Zacholi area · waterfalls and springs of Corinthia.

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