

Taxiarchis, Greece

DESCRIPTION AND GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Location:

Taxiarchis is a village situated in the mountainous area of Holomontas, in Chalkidiki peninsula. [40°25'30" N 23°31'18" E]

Description:

The village is built in the aprons of Mount Holomontas, which has a height of 1.165 meters and offers an excellent view smothered in the color of firs. A village full of life

with exceptional growth in a distance of just 65 kilometers from Thessaloniki, constituting the ideal resort for people who need to get away from stress, routine and the city burden.

Mount Holomontas allows the visitor to enjoy the dense forest, full of oaks, beeches, chestnuts, oaks, pines, firs and a variety of trees, shrubs, wildflowers and herbs, while the view from some areas is unique. The forest is usually snowy on winter and offers unforgettable tours.

The biodiversity of the forest favors the development of a large population of wild animals and birds.

Besides that, the village attracts you with its church, the museum and the preserved buildings, the old mansions, the narrow streets but also with the local celebrations and festivals (mainly in summertime).

Although mount Holomontas is not high, the landscape alternations, the rich vegetation, the green environment and of course the breath-taking view are the attractive features which will make you climb. There are a lot of trekking paths around the area, among wonderful forest scenery. The area is also famous for the plantation of fir trees by the villagers, to be sold as Christmas trees.

Relevant to stargazing, the skies in the area are dark and suitable for nighttime astronomical observation.

Best weather conditions for astronomical observing are in spring and summer, but the region is very attractive even in winter, when a lot of people visit the snowcapped mountain area.



Protection category:

The area is not a protected one. The skies in the area are dark and suitable for nighttime astronomical observation (limited light pollution).

ACCESSIBILITY

1. Accessibility of the resource (universal):

There are no known issues related with reduced mobility. The destination and the area of interest is a typical Greek agricultural area, with the problems which appear in such destinations and lack of infrastructures for people with reduced mobility.

Some of the residency facilities have rooms with accessibility and facilities for people with disabilities.

2. Resource Signaling:

Indoor.- indoor signs for the visit .

Actually it's very easy to get to the area as there are lots of routes to reach the village (mainly through Thessaloniki-Polygyros road).

By Car:

- Take the national road Thessaloniki-Poligiros, heading to Polygyros.
- Pass New Redestos, Vasilika, Galatista, the junction to Vavdos, and find the intersection to Agios Prodomos and Arnea. Do not turn to Agios Prodomos, but continue towards to Poligiros as you are going.
- 5, 8 kilometers below, you find the junction to Paleocastro - Forest University of Taxiarchis, where you have to turn left.
- Pass through Palaiocastro and follow the path to Taxiarchis.
- After 12km. encounter an intersection in a "horseshoe" of the road, which turns right to Taxiarchis and Poligiros. Do not turn right but continue as you were going.
- 2, 5km following encounter another intersection, left to right to Paleochora and Taxiarchis. You continue straight as you were going.
- After passing this junction 1.5 km encounter on your right the chapel of Prophet Ilia.
- At 50 meters after the church turn left on the dirt road that leads to "Elatodasos.

By Bus:

The bus access is exclusive to transit from Polygyros. From Polygyros to Taxiarchis, made two trips per day from Monday to Friday at 06:20 and at 15:00. Saturday is 1 service at 14:30 and Sunday there are several trips.

3. Level of accessibility:

The area can be reached through car from various directions.

The closest airport is Macedonia airport in Thessaloniki (which is an international airport) with a lot of arrivals from many European countries. Its distance is approximately 70 km from the village and can be reached through bus lines.

MARKETING

1. Marketing profile:

The main channels to communicate individually the characteristics of the area to the public are through internet, using sites and blogs created by the municipality of Taxiarchis and local companies.

In a second level, the prefecture of Chalkidiki, the Hotel's Union of Chalkidiki, Travel Agency of Chalkidiki and other tourism organizations, have a central guided policy - created from Greek National Tourism Organization (GNTO) - to promote the tourism industry of the area into international conferences and tour operators.

2. Information available of the resource:

<http://taxiarchis.net>

http://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/%CE%A4%CE%B1%CE%BE%CE%B9%CE%AC%CF%81%CF%87%CE%B7%CF%82_%CE%A7%CE%B1%CE%BB%CE%BA%CE%B9%CE%B4%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE%CF%82

www.apolimenipetra.gr/

www.elatodasos.gr/

www.jimmyshotel.gr/

<http://www.farmahotel.4ty.gr>

<http://www.psilirachi.gr/Default.asp?lang=47>

<http://www.holomontas-metoxi.webs.com>

www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQadckaJIZY

VISITS

1. Capacity of the establishment:

Members of OFA often come here when the skies are clear and moonless to set up the telescopes and observe the deep sky treasures.

The area attracts visitors from the coastal areas in the summer but those visits are short in time as the visitors mainly stays nearby the sea hotels and want to have a tour in the area to see the sights.

Likely, the last years, due to the presence of ecotourism activities and infrastructures, there is a growing waft of eco-tourists. The proximity of Thessaloniki, besides the existence of natural resources, is working positively and provides guarantees for the future development of ecotourism activities.

2. Schedule and Availability for visitors:

All the facilities are open all year-round. Best weather conditions for astronomical observing are in spring and summer, but the region is very attractive even in winter, when a lot of people visit the snowcapped mountain area.

3. Admission:

There are no organized tours for stargazing, but only amateur visits mainly organized for members of OFA. If someone wants to visit the area only for stargazing, he can do anytime free of charge. In case of lack of equipment, it would be preferable to communicate with members of OFA in order to carry out a joint visit (OFA doesn't offer admission visits to the area and it's up to the Club to decide if they would do tours free of charge).

4. Limitations:

Lack of official communication channels as the astrotourism is not yet an alternative tourism activity. Only amateur's astronomers visit the area to practice in stargazing.

For any information in related activities, someone can visit the OFA webpage (<http://www.ofa.gr/>).

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5. Visit the resource:

Self-guided

TOURIST RATING OF THE RESORT

1. Hierarchical level of resource:

Level 3: With exceptional Attractive and of great significance for the international tourist market. Capable to motivate by itself an important stream of visitors (actual or potential).

Level 2: Attractive with exceptional features in a country, able to motivate a stream of foreign or domestic visitors (current or potential), either alone or together with other adjacent resources.

Level 1: Attractive with some striking feature, able to interest visitors from long distance that had come to the zone by other touristic reasons, or capable to motivate local tourist flows.

Level 0: Attractive without enough features to be included in the previous hierarchies, but which is also part of the touristic heritage as an element that can complement other resources in higher hierarchies in the development of touristic resorts.

2. Tourism demand

Due to lack of official statistics for the area, we can assume that the profiles of people who visit the area are:

- Foreigners (mainly in the summer).
- Locals (mainly in the winter).
- Astronomy amateurs (short visits).

There is a weakness to identify percentages per visits, but we assume that there is a balance between foreigners and locals. Lack of relevant data for astrotourism activities.

The destination has all the main characteristics to become "Stargazing Place". Ideal climate, rich natural resources, hospitality facilities.

On the other hand, as the stargazing activities is something unknown to the Greek tourism industry, it needs noteworthy effort to build a network of "ideal" places in the Greek territory and in parallel to promote the activity to the public. In this effort, the amateur's astronomers clubs can be a valuable asset which will help to the establishment of this network.