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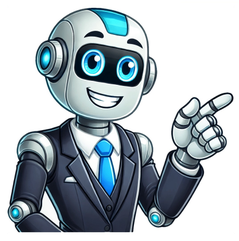

Visiting Meteora, Greece should be at the top of everyones Greece bucket list. Meteora is a UNESCO World Heritage site with beautiful views and an admirable history. The place feels holy. But before you visit, there are things you should prepare for: The Monasteries are holy places, and some are still inhabited by Monks and Nuns. While visiting Meteora Monasteries you must be dressed modestly according to their dress code. At the entrance where you buy the tickets, the person will also check your dress. If you are not dressed appropriately they do have skirts and shoulder scarves for women, so dont worry too much if you didnt pack something appropriate. For men we found that some locations had leg coverings if they were wearing shorts, but they also can deny men entry if they do not have coverings (so plan on bringing long pants!). Women are expected to wear skirts or dresses that are a conservative length, and shirts that cover the shoulders. Men are expected to wear pants and shirts that cover their shoulders. Also not required, but also consider that there are lots of stairs and walking! Wear comfortable shoes with good support! Some Monasteries have up to 300 steps. The only Monastery without stairs to enter is the St Stephens (or Agio Stefano) monastery. Be prepared with water, good shoes, and your stamina! If you have physical limitations, the views around Meteora and the St Stephens monastery are still great! However, they do not have any accommodations for monastery entrance. The monasteries have different parking lots, some larger than others. If you are driving your own car you might find that parking can be difficult at times depending on the time of day and the time of year that you visit (shoulder season and off-season will be easier). If you want to avoid the parking situation there are plenty of tours offered that will take you to the different monasteries as day trips from other sites, or just from Meteora! The monasteries have different schedules. There is typically one Monastery closed per week day during the summer, except St Nicholas (or Agios Nikolaos) monastery which is open every day during the summer. Before vising Meteora, take a look at the schedule (or timetable) here for closing times and monastery closures so you can plan accordingly. If you want to visit every monastery we recommend staying the night in the area so you can visit the monastery that was closed the previous day! Pictures are not permitted in many places inside the monasteries. The inside of the monasteries have incredible paintings and chapels, but you are not able to take photos of them. If you want to remember them you can buy some of the books at the gift shop. You also cannot take photos of the nuns or monks unless they expressly specify otherwise. You can take photos in the courtyards and the lookouts and you will really get some AMAZING shots! Visiting Meteora is an unforgettable experience. Ready to plan your visit? Read our article to learn more about what to expect at each Monastery. Share copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution You must give appropriate credit , provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made . You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation . No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. Monasteries have a strict dress code. Men should wear trousers and shirts with sleeves, women should wear long skirts. Convents, in case of negligence, can provide skirts for women as well as pants for men who wear short pants. Respect the dress code or you risk not being allowed to enter the monasteries. Perched atop towering cliffs, the Meteora monasteries stand as silent sentinels, bearing witness to centuries of history and spirituality. As you embark on a journey to explore these awe-inspiring sacred sites, its essential to embrace a code of conduct that respects the sanctity of the monastic life and the cultural heritage of Meteora. We have put together the most important tips regarding Meteora monasteries visiting Etiquette to ensure a mindful and respectful visit..Dress Code and SilenceWhen visiting Meteora monasteries, dress modestly to show respect for the religious environment. Both men and women should cover their shoulders, and its advisable for women to wear skirts. Carrying a scarf to cover your head is also a thoughtful gesture. Meteora monasteries are places of prayer and reflection. Keep noise to a minimum, speak softly, and avoid disrupting the tranquility of the surroundings. Silence enhances the spiritual experience for both visitors and the monastic community.Photography Guidelines and Religious PracticesCapture the stunning views of Meteora, but be mindful of monastery rules regarding photography. Some monasteries may prohibit photography inside, while others may restrict the use of flash. Always follow posted signs and guidelines to preserve the sanctity of the space. Be aware of the monasterys schedule for prayer and religious ceremonies. During these times, maintain a respectful distance and observe quietly. Avoid entering designated worship spaces unless explicitly invited. If you join a guided tour, listen attentively to the guides instructions. Ask questions respectfully and avoid disrupting the group. Stay together with the tour to ensure a smooth and harmonious exploration of the monastic wonders.Designated Spaces and DonationsCertain areas within the monasteries may be restricted to visitors. Respect any closed doors, barriers, or signs indicating private or sacred spaces. These areas are often reserved for the monks use or contain invaluable artifacts. Consider making a donation to support the upkeep of the Meteora monasteries. Your contribution aids in preserving these historical and cultural landmarks. Donation boxes are typically located near the entrance or in designated areas.By adhering to the Meteora Monasteries Visiting Etiquette , you not only ensure a respectful visit for yourself but also contribute to the preservation of the spiritual and cultural legacy of Meteora. Let each step within the monastery grounds be a testament to your appreciation for the rich history and enduring traditions of this remarkable destination. Rock formations and monasteries in Thessaly, GreeceFor the municipality, see Meteora (municipality). For other uses, see Meteora (disambiguation).MeteoraNative name (Greek)Landscape of MeteoraLocationTrikala, Thessaly, GreeceCoordinates394251N 213752E / 39.71417N 21.63111E / 39.71417; 21.63111 (Meteora)AreaThessalyUNESCO World Heritage SiteOfficial nameMeteoraTypeCulturalCriteriai, ii, iv, v, viiDesignated1988 (12th session)Referenceno.455RegionEuropeLocation in GreeceMap all coordinates using OpenStreetMapDownload coordinates as:KMLGPX (all coordinates)GPX (primary coordinates)GPX (secondary coordinates) Meteora by nightThe Meteora (/mtir/;[1] Greek: , pronounced [meteora]) is a rock formation in the regional unit of Trikala, in Thessaly, in northwestern Greece, hosting one of the most prominent complexes of Eastern Orthodox monasteries, viewed locally as second in importance only to Mount Athos.[2] Twenty-four monasteries were established atop the giant natural pillars and hill-like rounded boulders that dominate the local area, mainly from the second half of the 14th century under the local rule of Simeon Uro.[3][4]:414-415 Six of these are still active and open to visitors: the monasteries of Great Meteoron (est. 1356), Varlaam, Saint Nicholas Anapausas, Rousanou, Holy Trinity, and Saint Stephen. The latter became a community of nuns in 1961, whereas the former five remain managed by monks.Meteora is located in between the town of Kalabaka and the village of Kastraki at the northwestern edge of the Plain of Thessaly near the Pineios river and Pindus Mountains.[5] The Meteora complex was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1988 because of its outstanding architecture and beauty, combined with religious and cultural significance.[6] The name means "lofty", "elevated", and is etymologically related to meteor.[7]Beside the Pindos Mountains, in the western region of Thessaly, these unique and enormous columns of rock rise precipitously from the ground. But their unusual form is not easy to explain geologically. They are not volcanic plugs of hard igneous rock typical elsewhere, but the rocks are composed of a mixture of sandstone and conglomerate.[8]:5The conglomerate was formed of deposits of stone, sand, and mud from streams flowing into a delta at the edge of a lake, over millions of years. About 60 million years ago during the Paleogene period[9] a series of earth movements pushed the seabed upward, creating a high plateau and causing many vertical fault lines in the thick layer of sandstone. The huge rock pillars were then formed by weathering by water, wind, and extremes of temperature on the vertical faults. It is unusual that this conglomerate formation and type of weathering are confined to a relatively localised area within the surrounding mountain formation. The complex is referred to an exhumed continental remnant of Pangean association.[8][clarification needed]This type of rock formation and weathering process has happened in many other places locally and throughout the world, but what makes Meteora's appearance special is the uniformity of the sedimentary rock constituents deposited over millions of years leaving few signs of vertical layering, and the localised abrupt vertical weathering.Excavations and research have discovered petrified diatoms in Theopetra Cave, which have contributed to understanding the Palaeo-climate and climate changes. Radiocarbon dating evidences human presence dating back 50,000 years.[3] The cave used to be open to the public, but is currently closed indefinitely, for safety inspections.[10]Vegetation grows thickly out of the vertical rock walls, mainly due to the water that one is able to find in the cracks and crevices that scale the cliff.[8]:11 Over the past several hundred years, the reports that the Meteora was easily accessible by foot have changed because now one must pass through an impenetrable jungle.[8]:13Being such massive unpredictable rock pillars, rock falls pose a constant threat to pilgrims and tourists of Meteora. An earthquake of magnitude 7 on the Richter Scale shook the rocks in 1954 but the thin pillars still stand today. In 2005, a massive rock fell, closing the access road leading up to Meteora for days.[8]:14See also: Theopetra CaveTheopetra Cave is located 4 kilometres (2.5mi) from Kalambaka. Its uniqueness from an archeological perspective is that a single site contains records of two greatly significant cultural transitions: the replacement of Neanderthals by modern humans and later, the transition from hunting-gathering to farming after the end of the last Ice Age. The cave consists of an immense 500 square metres (5,400sqft) rectangular chamber at the foot of a limestone hill, which rises to the northeast above the village of Theopetra, with an entrance 17 metres (56ft) wide by 3 metres (9.8ft) high. It lies at the foot of the Chasia mountain range, which forms the natural boundary between Thessaly and Macedonia regions, while the Lithaios River, a tributary of the Pineios River, flows in front of the cave. The small Lithaios River flowing literally on the doorsteps of the cave meant that cave dwellers always had easy access to fresh, clean water without the need to cover daily long distances to find it.[11]Caves in the vicinity of Meteora were inhabited continuously between 50,000 and 5,000 years ago. The oldest known example of a built structure, a stone wall that blocked two-thirds of the entrance to the Theopetra cave, was constructed 23,000 years ago, probably as a barrier against cold winds (Earth was experiencing an ice age at the time), and many paleolithic and neolithic artifacts of human occupation have been found within the caves.[3][12]Meteora is not mentioned in classical Greek myths, nor in Ancient Greek literature. The first people who were documented to inhabit Meteora after the Neolithic Era were an ascetic group of hermit monks who, in the 800s CE, moved up to the ancient pinnacles. They lived in hollows and fissures in the rock towers, some of them as high as 1800ft (550m) above the plain. This great height, combined with the sheerness of the cliff walls, kept away all but the most determined visitors. Initially, the hermits led a life of solitude, meeting only on Sundays and special days, to worship and pray in a chapel built at the foot of a rock known as Dupiani.[2]As early as the eleventh century, monks occupied the caverns of Meteora. However, monasteries were not built there until the 1300s, when the monks sought somewhere to hide in the face of an increasing number of attacks by the Turks upon Greece.[13][14] At this time, access to the top was via removable ladders or hoisting ropes. Currently, getting up there is much simpler, due to steps having been carved-into the rock during the 1920s. Of the 24 monasteries, only six (four of men, two of women) are still functioning, with each housing fewer than ten individuals.[15]The exact date of the establishment of the monasteries is widely believed to be unknown. However, there are clues to when each of the monasteries was constructed. By the late eleventh century and early 1100s, a rudimentary monastic state had formed, called the Skete of Stagoi, and it was centered around the still-standing church of Theotokos (Mother of God).[2] By the end of the 1100s, an ascetic community had flocked to Meteora.In 1344, Athanasios Koinovitis from Mount Athos, later known as Athanasios the Meteorite, brought a group of followers to Meteora. From 1356 to 1372, he founded The Monastery of Great Meteoron on the Broad Rock. That location was perfect for the monks, because there, they were safe from political upheaval, and they had complete control of the entry to the monastery. The only means of reaching it was by climbing a long ladder, which was drawn-up whenever the monks thought that there was a threat to them.[16] The creation of the monastic community at Meteora was protected and sponsored by the local lord Simeon Uro, based in nearby Trikala, who in 1356 had proclaimed himself Emperor of Serbs and Greeks following the death of Stefan Duan.[4]:414 Simeon Uros was succeeded in 1370 by his son John Uro, who three years later retired as a monk to the Meteoron monastery and died there in the early 1420s. At the end of the fourteenth century, Christian rule over northern Greece was being increasingly threatened by Turkish raiders who wanted control over the fertile plain of Thessaly, which they finally secured in the second half of the 15th century. The hermit monks, seeking a retreat from the expanding Ottoman empire, found the inaccessible rock pillars of Meteora to be an ideal refuge. More than 20 monasteries were built,[14] of which six remain today. In 1517, Theophanes built the monastery of Varlaam, which was reputed to house the finger of St. John and the shoulder blade of St. Andrew.[17]Access to the monasteries was originally (and deliberately) difficult, requiring either long ladders that were latched together, or large nets that were used to haul-up both goods and people. This required quite a leap of faith, because the ropes were replaced, so the story goes, only "when the Lord let them break".[18] In the words of UNESCO: "The net in which intrepid pilgrims were hoisted up vertically alongside the 373 metres (1,224ft) cliff where the Varlaam monastery dominates the valley symbolizes the fragility of a traditional way of life that is threatened with extinction."[19]Until the 1600s, the primary means of conveying goods and people from these high places was by means of baskets and ropes.[20]Under the Convention of Constantinople (1881), Thessaly was taken-over by the Kingdom of Greece. In 1921, Queen Marie of Romania visited Meteora, becoming the first woman ever allowed to enter the Great Meteoron monastery.[21]In the 1920s, there was an improvement in the arrangements: Steps were cut into the rock, making the complex accessible via a bridge from the nearby plateau. During World War II, the site was bombed.[22]The Alpha, Beta, and Gamma Rocks of MeteoraMap of MeteoraThere are various rocks of Meteora that surround the village of Kastraki and border the north side of the main town of Kalabaka.[23][24][25] The height in metres is also given for various rocks.[26]Dupiani (; 390m (1,280ft))[27][28]Agio Pneuma (; 600m (2,000ft)),[29] site of the historic Monastery of St. George of Mandila[bg] and Monks' PrisonKumaries (; 497m (1,631ft))Toichos Alpha ( ) / Kafkasia (480m (1,570ft))[26]Toichos Beta ( ) / Sfika (528m (1,732ft))[26]Toichos Gamma ( ) / Palaiokranies (540m (1,770ft))[26]Toichos Delta ( ) / Lianomodia (531m (1,742ft))[26][30]St. Eustratius ( )Archangel ()Chalasma ()Marmaro (; "marble"),[31] traversed by a paved road that connects Kastraki with KalabakaSurloti (; 600m (2,000ft))[32]Modi (; 584.5m (1,918ft)), site of the historic Monastery of St. ModestusAlysos () / Altsos () / Alsos () (587.8m (1,928ft)),[33] site of the historic Monastery of the Apostle Peter's ChainsPyxari (; 523.9m (1,719ft)),[34] site of the historic Hermitage of Saint Gregory the Theologian[bg] ( ), Monastery of St. Anthony, and Monastery of Chrysostomos[35]Badovas (; 447.3m (1,468ft)), site of the historic Monastery of St. Nicholas of Badovas[bg][36]Ambaria (; 400m (1,300ft))[37][38]Agia (; 630m (2,070ft)), also known as Megali Agia, or "Large Aya". Site of the historic Monastery of St. Apostoles ( ).Mikri Agia ( ), or "Small Aya"Adrachti (; 474m (1,555ft))Ftelias ()St. Dimitrios ( ), where the Monastery of St. Dimitrios and Ypapantis Monastery can be foundKelarakia ()Psaropetra ("Fish Rock"), now a viewpoint on the main road that is popular with touristsThe greater Meteora rock formation also extends northwest into the Gavros and Agios Dimitrios areas, although the term Meteora is commonly used to refer to only the rocks around Kalabaka and Kastraki.At their peak in the 16th century, there were 24 monasteries at Meteora in Greece. They were created to serve monks and nuns following the teachings of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Much of the architecture of these buildings is Athonite in origin. Today there are six still functioning, while the remainder are largely in ruin. Perched onto high cliffs, they are now accessible by staircases and pathways cut into the rock formations.[16]Traditionally, the 24 historic monasteries of Meteora are listed as follows.[39][40] Coordinates are also given for some sites.[41] The list is primarily sourced from Vlioras (2017),[41] with some additional notes from Provatakis (2006).[40]EnglishGreek transliterationGreek scriptNotesImageMonastery of the Holy Archangels[bg]Agion Taxiarchon Monastery ruins (394301N 213809E / 39.717067N 21.635697E / 39.717067; 21.635697 (Monastery of the Holy Archangels)) on Archangel (Taxiarchon) Rock ( ).Monastery of the Apostle Peter's ChainsAlyseos Apostolou Petrou Probably built around 1400. Ruins (394246N 213746E / 39.712752N 21.629524E / 39.712752; 21.629524 (Monastery of the Apostle Peter's Chains)) on Alysos () Rock.Monastery of the PantocratorPantokratoraMentioned in documents from 1650. Ruins (394320N 213717E / 39.722293N 21.621406E / 39.722293; 21.621406 (Monastery of the Pantocrator)) at the Dupiani area. It is located about 30 metres above the ground.Monastery of St. John of BunilasIoannou tou Bounela Ruins of monastery walls in an area called Bunila, known as Palaiomonastiro ().Monastery of St. John the BaptistAgiou Ioanne Prodromou Founded in the mid-17th century. Ruins (394325N 213726E / 39.723732N 21.624006E / 39.723732; 21.624006 (Monastery of St. John the Baptist)) located on a rock directly adjacent to the Monastery of St. Nicholas Anapausas. The rock on which the monastery was built was the residence of Athanasius the Meteorite. Theophanes and Nektarios Apsarades, the founders of the Monastery of Varlaam, also lived on the rock for seven years before they built Varlaam.Ypsilotera Monastery / KalligrafonMones Ypseloteras / Kalligrafon / The monastery was famous for its manuscripts and calligraphers. Founded in 1347 by Paschalis of Kalambaka. Ruins (394330N 213740E / 39.725090N 21.627798E / 39.725090; 21.627798 (Ypsilotera Monastery)) located on Ypsilotera Rock (585.7 m[26]) next to the "Devil's Tower", a geological rock formation that is between the Monastery of St. Nicholas Anapausas and Monastery of Varlaam. In the photo to the left, Ypsilotera is the free-standing dome-shaped rock on the left, covered with vegetation on top.Kallistratou MonasteryKallistratouExact location uncertain. In the general area of the Monastery of St. Nicholas Anapausas and Monastery of Rousanou. Also known as the Monastery of Christ the Savior (, Moni Sotiros Christou).Panagia of Mikani Monastery (Paleopanagia)Panagias tes Mekanes / Palaiopanagia / Founded in 1358 in a rock cave (39488N 214042E / 39.80222N 21.67833E / 39.80222; 21.67833 (Palaiopanagia Monastery)). 7km north of Vlachava village, near the Ion (or Mikani) River, a tributary of the Pineios.[42] It can be reached via a dirt road that goes out to the northeast from the village center of Vlachava. A carved staircase leads up to the rock cave. Elevation: about 600 m. Also, directly behind it lies Kallistra Rock ( ), the site of the ruins of the Monastery of St. Kallistos ( ), which is also called the Monastery of the Holy Apostles ( ).Monastery of Great MeteoronMetamorfoses One of the 6 open monasteries today.Monastery of Rousanou / ArsanouRousanou / Arsanou / One of the 6 open monasteries today.Monastery of St. AnthonyAgiou Antoniou Built around the 14th century, only a small church has survived from the monastery (394244N 213718E / 39.712166N 21.621643E / 39.712166; 21.621643 (Monastery of St. Anthony)), on the south side of Pyxari Rock.Monastery of Varlaam / All SaintsVarlaam / Agion Panton / One of the 6 open monasteries today.Monastery of St. George of Mandila[bg]Agiou Georgiou tou Mandela Ruins at the Holy Spirit (Agion Pnefma) Rock (394306N 213721E / 39.718336N 21.622516E / 39.718336; 21.622516 (Monastery of St. George of Mandila)). Kerchiefs (mandilia) are traditionally hung at the cave entrance. The cave is 15 metres long and 45 metres deep at its center, and is located about 30 metres above the ground. It may have been one of the four monasteries founded around 1367 by Neilos, the Prior of the Skete of Stagoi. The Cave of St. George of Mandila may be the same as the Cave of Archimandrite Makarios near Pigadion.Monastery of St. Gregory[bg]Agiou Gregoriou Founded in the 14th century. Ruins (394244N 213718E / 39.712271N 21.621536E / 39.712271; 21.621536 (Monastery of St. Gregory)) on Pyxari Rock.Monastery of St. DimitriosAgiou Demetriou Destroyed by Ali Pasha Tepelena in 1809 since Greek insurgents led by Thymios Vlachavas had set up their headquarters in the monastery. Ruins (394400N 213752E / 39.7332099N 21.6310140E / 39.7332099; 21.6310140 (Monastery of St. Dimitrios)) on Dimitrios Rock above Ypapantis Monastery.[43]Monastery of St. ModestusAgiou Modestou Built around the 12th century. First mentioned in a 12th-century letter. Also mentioned in 1614. Ruins (394253N 213746E / 39.714796N 21.629437E / 39.714796; 21.629437 (Monastery of St. Modestus)) on Modesto (Modi) Rock (rock on the right in the photo).Holy MonasteryAgias Mones The monastery was mentioned in 1614, which at the time was inhabited by more than 20 monks. Ruins (394326N 213741E / 39.723969N 21.627943E / 39.723969; 21.627943 (Holy Monastery)) in the Sterna area near Ypsilotera Monastery. The monastery had also sought to gain recognition as a stavropegion.Monastery of St. Nicholas of Badova / Nikolaus KofinaAgiou Nikolaou tou Bantova / Agiou Nikolaou Kofina / Founded c. 1400 in a rock cave on Badovas Rock. Not preserved, since in 1943 it was bombed and destroyed by the Germans. Ruins (394239N 213720E / 39.710731N 21.622125E / 39.710731; 21.622125 (Monastery of St. Nicholas of Badova)), which can be reached via a series of ladders passing through three caves, located at the southwestern edge of the Meteora rock complex.Monastery of St. Nicholas AnapausasAgiou Nikolaou Anapausa One of the 6 open monasteries today.Monastery of St. StefanosAgiou Stefanou One of the 6 open monasteries today.Monastery of the Holy TrinityAgias Triados One of the 6 open monasteries today.Monastery of the Holy ApostlesAgion Apostolon Ruins have been preserved (394242N 213731E / 39.711703N 21.625157E / 39.711703; 21.625157 (Monastery of the Holy Apostles)). Founded in the early 16th century (perhaps by the monk Kallistos) and documented in 1551. Only ruins, murals, carved stairs, and a cistern remain. Located on Agia Rock at the southern edge of the Meteora rock complex. Full Greek name: ().[44]Monastery of St. TheodoreAgion Theodoron Ruins (393949N 214141E / 39.663677N 21.694746E / 39.663677; 21.694746 (Monastery of St. Theodore)) located near Theopetra Cave, southeast of Kalabaka town.Ypapantis MonasteryYpapantesFounded in 1367 by the Prior/Abbot of the Skete of Dupiani. In 1765, it was restored by Athanasios Vlachavas, a local leader. Today, Ypapantis Monastery (literally "Monastery of the Purification [of the Virgin Mary]") is inactive and rarely visited, although the building (394400N 213751E / 39.733470N 21.630868E / 39.733470; 21.630868 (Ypapantis Monastery)) has been restored.[45] The interior of the building is usually closed to visitors. Accessible by footpaths, one of which passes by Ftelias () Rock.Other sites (sketes, hermitages, rocks, etc.) include:SiteNotesImageDupiani ()Rock with the first monastery (or Skete of the Holy Virgin of Dupiani[bg]), also known as the Panagia Parthnos Kyrikou Monastery (394316N 213710E / 39.721072N 21.619516E / 39.721072; 21.619516 (Panagia Parthenos Kyriakou)), founded in Meteora, and also the name of the rock on which it is built. The original monastery itself has not survived. The early 13th-century chapel built on this site is still in use and maintained. Renovations took place in 1867 and 1974. Located on the north side of Kastraki village. The Monastery of St. Dimitrios of Dupiani (394320N 213717E / 39.722322N 21.621405E / 39.722322; 21.621405 (Monastery of St. Dimitrios of Dupiani)) at Dupiani is not to be confused with the Monastery of St. Dimitrios adjacent to Ypapantis Monastery.Agiou Pneuma[bg] ("Holy Spirit"; Greek: , romanized:Agiou Pneumatos)Rock monastery with ruins (394306N 213730E / 39.718285N 21.625010E / 39.718285; 21.625010 (Agiou Pneuma)) connected by a narrow rock-carved path. Preserved sarcophagus, monastic cells, two cisterns, and a rock-carved altar and shrine.Monks' Prison (Filaka Monakn)The Monks' Prison (394313N 213738E / 39.720162N 21.627118E / 39.720162; 21.627118 (Monks Prison)) is perched on a rock cliff on the Agion Pneuma Rock. It may be the same as the Cave of Neophytos, the founder of the St. Dimitrios and Pantokrator monasteries on Dupiani Rock. Also known as Oglas () or the Nuns' Prison (, Fylakes ton Kalogeron).Hermitage of St. Athanasius of Meteora (Greek:)Ruins of a hermitage on the Holy Spirit Rock said to be inhabited by St. Athanasios the Meteorite ( ) (394302N 213721E / 39.717172N 21.622431E / 39.717172; 21.622431 (Hermitage of St. Athanasius of Meteora)). The Cave of St. Athanasius of Meteora (394326N 213741E / 39.724027N 21.627965E / 39.724027; 21.627965 (Cave of St. Athanasius of Meteora)) is next to the Holy Monastery.[46]Pyxari ()Rock with cave hermitages perched on cliffs, formerly inhabited by ascetics. Located at the southwestern edge of the Meteora rock complex.Ambaria ()Rock with cave hermitages perched on cliffs, formerly inhabited by ascetics. Located at the southwestern edge of the Meteora rock complex.Monastery of St. Eustratius (Moni Agios Efstratios,)Little-known monastery on Surloti Rock ( ).Staircase of St. EustratiusThe Staircase of St. Eustratius (394302N 213804E / 39.717349N 21.634427E / 39.717349; 21.634427 (Staircase of St. Eustratius)) is located on the eastern side of St. Eustratios Rock. There are a few different stairways carved into the rock.Monastery of Theostiriktos ( )Location uncertain. In the general area of Stylos Stagios ( ) / Agion Pneuma Rock.Cell of Constantius ( )Northeast of Pyxari Rock in a forested valley (394251N 213730E / 39.7142225N 21.6249977E / 39.7142225; 21.6249977 (Cell of Constantius)).[47] Also called the Panagia Hermitage ( ), Panagia Chapel ( ), or Trani Church ( ).Monastery of St. Nicholas of Petra ( )Ruins (394239N 213716E / 39.710824N 21.621164E / 39.710824; 21.621164 (Monastery of St. Nicholas of Petra)) on Badovas / Bantova Rock, just to the west of the monastery of St. Nicholas of Badova. Also known as the Monastery of St. Nicholas of Skala ( ).Kelarakia ()Ruins (394331N 213757E / 39.72514N 21.63241E / 39.72514; 21.63241 (Kelarakia)) on a rock directly to the east of the Monastery of Varlaam. The Cell of St. Paul the Apostle ( ) can probably be identified with Kelarakia. The Plakes () area, a valley with various rocks, is located just south of Kelarakia.Monastery of the Three Hierarchs ( )Somewhere to the east of Kastraki. Exact location unknown.Main article: Monastery of Great MeteoronThe Great MeteoronGreat Meteoron MonasteryThe Holy Monastery of Great Meteoron is the oldest and largest of the monasteries of Meteora. The monastery is believed to have been built just before the mid 14th century by a monk from Mount Athos named Saint Athanasios the Meteorite.[48] He began the build with a church in dedication to the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary. He later added small cells so that monks could concentrate and live atop the rock formations.[49] The monastery's second name is, The Holy Monastery of the Transfiguration, which got its name from the second church St. Meteorites built. The successor of Saint Athanasios was Saint Joasaph, who continued to build more cells, a hospital, and renovated the churches atop the rocks. The Monastery thrived in the 16th century when it received many imperial and royal donations.[50] At the time it had over three hundred monks living and worshipping within its cells. It is still a living monastery as there were three monks in residence as of 2015.[51][49]Being the largest among all the monasteries allows it to have a particular layout filled with many buildings. The katholikon is dedicated to the Transfiguration of Jesus and was the first church of the monastery. The hermitage of the first founder of the monastery is a small building carved in rock. The kitchen or what is commonly referred to as the hestia is a dome-shaped building near the refectory. There is also a hospital, with its famous roof of the ground floor made of brick and supported on four columns. The three old churches or chapels include: The Chapel of Saint John the Baptist which lies next to the katholikon sanctuary, The Saints Constantine and Helen Chapel which is an aisle-less church with large vault, and finally the chapel of Virgin Mary situated in the cave.[49][52][53]Main article: Monastery of VarlaamThe Monastery of VarlaamThe Monastery of Varlaam is the second largest monastery of Meteora. The name Varlaam comes from a monk named Varlaam who scaled the rocks in 1350 and began construction on the monasteries. Varlaam built three churches by hoisting materials up the face of the cliffs. After Varlaam's death, the monastery was abandoned for two hundred years until two monk brothers, Theophanes and Nektarios Apsarades, came to the rock in the 16th century and began to rebuild the churches in October 1517.[54] The two brothers from Ioannina spent twenty-two years hoisting materials to the top of the rock formation, however, the building only is reported to have taken around twenty days.[17] Monks have been present since the 16th century, however, there has been a constant decline in their presence since the 17th century.[50][17] Today the monastery is accessed through a series of ladders that scale the north side of the rock. The museum is open to travelers and contains a wide array of relics and ecclesiastical treasures. As of 2015[update] there are seven monks remaining in Varlaam.[17]Main article: Monastery of RousanouThe Monastery of Rousanou located atop the rock structuresThe Monastery of Rousanou is believed to have been constructed, like many of the other monasteries, in the 14th century.[55] The cathedral is believed to have been built in the 16th century and later decorated in 1540. The name Rousanou is believed to come from the first group of monks who settled on the rock from Russia.[56] The monastery sits on the elevation 484 meters. Lying in the middle of the site, visitors can see the other monasteries, as well as the ruins of the Monastery of St. John the Baptist and the Pantokrator.[57]Main article: Monastery of St. Nicholas AnapausasThe Monastery of St. Nicholas AnapausasThe Monastery of St. Nicholas Anapausas is located atop a small narrow rock. It is approximately eighty meters high and the first which the pilgrims encounter on their way to the holy Meteora. The Monastery was founded in the late 14th century and today is surrounded by the deserted and ruined monasteries of St. John Prodromos, the Pantocrator, and the chapel of Panagia Doupiani.[58] The monastery served as a resting place for pilgrims and quickly got its name of Anapausas (modern pronunciation anapafseos), 'resting'.[13][14] Being on such a narrow surface, the floors are connected through an interior staircase. St. Nicholas is honored on the second floor where the katholikon is located. On the third floor, there is the Holy Table and the walls are decorated by 14th-century frescoes. The monastery has been restored in the 16th century and again in the 1960s.[14]Main article: Monastery of the Holy Trinity, MeteoraThe Monastery of The Holy TrinityThe Monastery of the Holy Trinity is believed to have been built in the 14th and 15th century. Even prior to this, ancient Greeks established hermitages at the base of the rock cliffs.[59] In the 14th century, John Uro moved to the Meteora and endowed and built monasteries on top of the rock cliffs. He offered the sanctuaries as a safe haven during times of political upheaval.[13] The monk Dometius was said to be the founder of the monastery, arriving at the site of Holy Trinity in 1438. The actual monastery is believed to have been built between 1475 and 1476.[60] Some do say that the exact construction date of the monastery like many of the other monasteries is unknown. By the end of the 16th century this was one of the last six monasteries still atop the Meteora.[16]The Monastery of St. StephenMain article: Monastery of Saint Stephen (Meteora)The Monastery of St. Stephen is located on a plateau-like structure. The original monastery was believed to have been built in the 14th century, however, a new katholikon was built in 1798 making it the newest of all the meteorite structures.[61] The monastery is made up of many buildings including new katholikon, the "hestia" (kitchen), an old refectory that has since become a museum, and an assortment of rooms with different purposes.[62] These include workrooms for paintings, embroidery, incense-making, and needlework. The church's interior was decorated with frescoes on the inside for a short period after 1545. However, during the World wars, the monasteries were bombed heavily and ransacked in the belief that the monks were holding refugees.[61] As of 2015[update], the Monastery of St. Stephen is home to 28 nuns after its conversion to a nunnery in 1961.[61]Meteora in the early morning hoursThe Rousanou, the Nikolaos and the Grand Metereon monasteriesThe Monastery of Rousanou (in order from background to foreground). The Holy Spirit Rock is on the left side, while Dupiani Rock can be seen in the center, at the middle of the valley.Panorama of the Meteora valleyPanoramic view at Meteora valleyPanoramic view at the Monastery of VarlaamPanoramic view at the Monastery of RoussanouPanoramic view at monasteries of Varlaam and Grand Meteoron. From left to right: Kelarakia, Varlaam Monastery, Holy Monastery, Ypsilotera, Devil's Tower, and Grand Meteoron.Meteora is popular with hikers, trail runners, mountain bikers, and rock climbers from around the world, particularly during the summer. The Meteora MTB Race, also known as the Vasilis Efstathiou ( ) MTB Race, is held annually at Meteora.[63]The monastery of Holy Trinity was a filming location for the 1981 James Bond movie For Your Eyes Only.[64]The 1957 film Boy on a Dolphin is partly shot in Meteora.[65] Clifton Webb's character visits Meteora, and goes up to the Holy Trinity monastery to do some library research.Scenes in Tintin and the Golden Fleece were also shot at the Meteora monasteries.Michina, the main setting of the movie Pokmon: Arceus and the Jewel of Life, is based on Meteora.Meteora is the main location in the fiction book The Spook's Sacrifice, by English author Joseph Delaney.One of the surviving characters in Max Brooks's zombie apocalypse novel World War Z finds refuge and peace of mind in the monasteries during and after the zombie war.The 2012 film Meteora, directed by Spiros Stathoulopoulos, is set in the monasteries and scenery of Meteora.The primary location and name of Volume 3 in the comic book series Le Dcalogue by French author Frank Giroud is based on Meteora.The Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3 DLC Map "Sanctuary" is set in the monasteries of the Meteora.The 2003 album by Linkin Park takes its name from the site.The monasteries were a filming location for the 1976 action movie Sky Riders.[66] starring Susannah York, James Coburn and Robert Culp.In The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles episode "Travels with Father", Indiana and his father visit Meteora.Meteora served as an inspiration for the Eyrie in the Game of Thrones television series.[67]The design of the Elysium realm in The Fate of Atlantis downloadable chapter of Assassin's Creed Odyssey was inspired by the geology of Meteora.Meteora was the location of the first challenge in the eighth season of the Belgian reality show De Mol.[68]A professional wrestling move innovated by CIMA was named after the Meteora, as that was where he had proposed to his wife.The external design of the level "St. Francis' Folly" in the 1996 game Tomb Raider and its 2007 remake was inspired by the lofty monasteries of Meteora.^ "Meteora". 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