

MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | FRIDAY, 26 APRIL 2013

Greece

We are sitting here tonight beside a beautiful raging river, free camping. It is our first attempt at this and we never thought that it would be in Greece.

Early this morning we would not have hoped that the day could turn out so nicely. We exited the ferry at Igoumenitsa on the north-western coast. Our plan was to travel about 70 kms inland to the town of Ioannina, where we had located a caravan park and hoped to get information about an area north of that called the Zagorohoria. It is a mountainous area that was so remote that the local villages had no road network. They used local stone to build bridges and footpaths that linked all the communities together. There are walking tracks everywhere. Their remoteness has meant that they have retained much of their original character.

Anyway, once in Ioannina, we found no tourist information and decided that the place did not deserve a stop. We decided instead to use our limited maps and head off into the mountains to see what we could find.

The drive was great. Snow capped mountains once again. But this time the mountains below the snow line were covered in dense undergrowth. The valleys are intensively farmed. Blossoms were out



Local Knowledge

Working out where to go is one thing, but actually getting there is another.

Today, for example, we were told that the area inland from Ioannina was worth visiting so we pointed our GPS towards the town and thought we could work out the rest as we went along. How wrong we were.

Firstly we found that the Greek names were confusing. The English

alphabet does not match up with the Greek one so it had the GPS stumped. Secondly we were reluctant to simply turn into a small road going steeply uphill. Three point turns in our van can be quite daunting.

We worked out the best thing to do is to strike up a conversation with a local and ask their advice. You learn things from locals that not even the tourists know about.



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NOWAK IN HOUSE JOKE Our kids will be very happy to know that we have added the Greek language edition to our collection of Kellogg's Corn Flakes packets.



ROADSIDE MEMORIALS We found lots of these monuments beside the roads we traveled on today. I suppose it illustrates the point that Greece has one of the worst road tolls in Europe.



CENTRAL PARK We could do with Greek language tuition as much as the Greeks could benefit with a better understanding of English

SNAPS



VIEW FROM KONISTA



VOIDOMATIS STONE BRIDGE



DOWNSTREAM

Our own little slice of heaven.

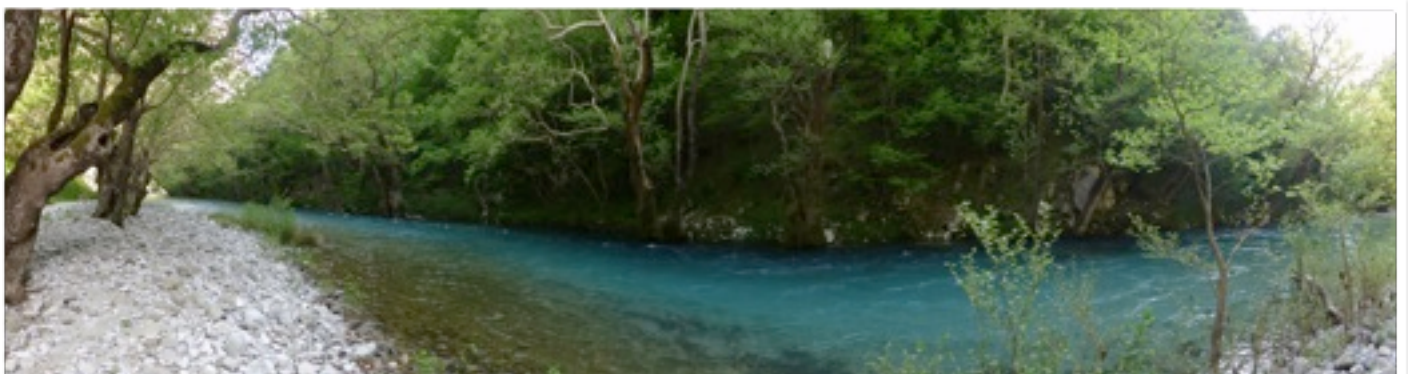
on the trees. We turned back after a certain distance thinking that the road the GPS wanted us to go on was too narrow. After a short distance we chanced upon a sign that headed us towards an ancient stone bridge. Wow. It was beautiful - built in 1835. We walked over it and along the course of it's river for some distance. The river has cut a great gorge. The colours of the river, with the sun streaming through the trees, was magnificent. After a very relaxing late lunch we went for another amble on the other side of the river.

We were delighted to have found a little bit of this amazing area to explore. A fellow motorhomer, who is camped beside us, lent us some maps that he managed to find. They will hopefully allow us to find a few of these stone

villages tomorrow, before we head onto our next destination.

THIS PLACE DESERVES A WEEK BUT WE WILL HAVE TO LEAVE THAT FOR OUR EUROPEAN FRIENDS TO EXPERIENCE.

It is such a lovely sunny day that we even jettisoned our long trousers and heavy shoes. Two of the blankets have also been put in storage. It was supposed to get to 30 degrees. It certainly did feel quite hot on our walks. Tonight we will sleep with the sound of the roaring river in the background and will wake up with the view of the river in our window. Our own little slice of heaven.





PHOTOS

