

# PELOPONNESE, GREECE

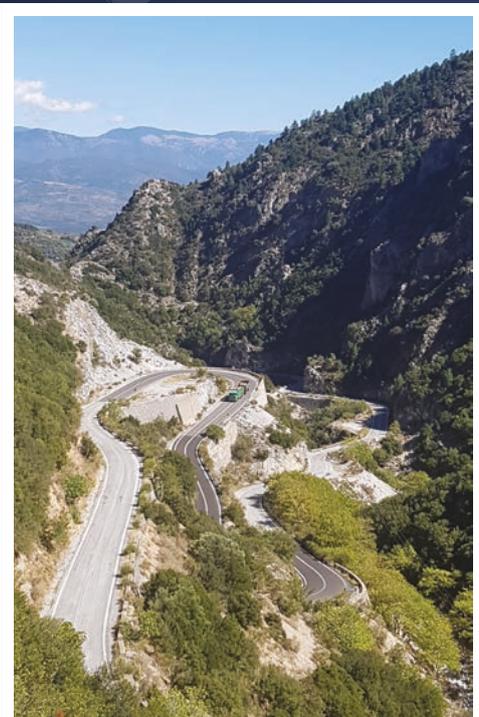
October 2017

It didn't take 30 minutes to clear Athens and the peripheral motorway before ascending north through barren hills and sparse olive groves. I was grateful for the cooling breeze before my stop in the ruins of Delphi. Delphi is celebrated in legend as the scene of Hercules death and according to Zeus, the centre of the Earth. The hairpin bends back down were too tight to be enjoyed but the azure blue Aegean Sea, far below, is a splendid sight.

I wasn't expecting temperatures of 10°C but the pass over the Taygetos Mountains in the morning was well over 4,000ft high, so perhaps it was to be expected. The sweeping climb up was a joy, unlike yesterday's descent and the mountain village with its central square, lined with tavernas and an old church, all bathed in sunshine a welcome stop.



*Ancient Olympia*



*Lagkadas Pass*

The narrow road that followed and the vertical village clung to the hillside way above the wooded ravine below. Quite without warning the single track road would widen into a sweeping racetrack before shrinking back to a single track. New tarmac teased me from time to time but not for long. I ended the day with a visit to Ancient Olympia where the first Olympic Games were held in 776 BC. I think this was a little before WADA had been formed.

I might have been a little early arriving at the hotel, so asked the man at reception what time check in was. "Chicken" he queried, "I don't know about chicken. Would you like to see a menu?"

Another day in the mountains beckoned, through tiny hamlets, under clear blue skies. The final reward was a ride over the splendid Lagkadas pass, which had the added bonus of dropping down into a narrow valley before climbing back up again and finishing on the coast. The commercial ships anchored offshore looked far more romantic after dark, all lit up beyond the harbour wall.



**Contact Gordon**

Email [gordon@linbeck.co.uk](mailto:gordon@linbeck.co.uk) for a chat or advice on your next motorcycle adventure.

## PELOPONNESE, GREECE (cont.)

Even the coast road south followed the hillside, undulations and curves, this way and that, providing alternate views across the bay in both directions. One day merged into another as I made my way across the peninsula in the direction of Monemvasia. Monemvasia, often known as the Gibraltar of Greece, is not quite as far south as you can go but its far enough.

The day started benignly on roads meandering through olive groves before climbing up high over a mountain pass. Unbeknown to me a gorge of magnificent proportions lay on the other side. The hairpin road down was hewn into the rockface under towering cliffs and glorious sunshine, a sight to behold and to savour.



The goats were defying gravity, tumbling down almost sheer rockfaces, still managing to remain upright as they spilled onto the road in front. The Goatherder followed with nothing more than a crook to arrest his descent. It was soon after that the insect flew under my helmet, probably a wasp and in my clumsy attempt to flick it out, it bit me. I didn't manage to shave that evening due to a large swelling on my jaw.

I'd one last night to experience Nafpoli and its plentiful quayside tavernas before returning around the coastal mountains, crossing the Corinthian Canal and back to Athens.

My original plan had been to ride down through the Alps to Ancona in Italy and take the ferry to Patras. In the end I chose to fly and rent a GS from Moto Greece in Athens.



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