

Messinia, the ideal tourist destination...

If you find boring the classical tourist destinations and are looking for an original destination for your trip this year, think smart and choose Messinia!

At the Crossroads of West and East, yesterday and today, Messinia with its rich cultural heritage, its mild climate, vast natural beauty and the most vibrant city of the southern Peloponnese, Kalamata, is the most ideal all season destination!

Messinia is a destination that satisfies every requirement, a destination combining originality, comfort and fun, offering satisfaction to the guests, many facilities to event organizers, a destination that will ensure success.

- **Where is Messinia**

Messinia is lying at the south-western most tip of the Peloponnese! With 140km of coastline embraced by a crystal sea, beautiful landscapes, picturesque towns! The capital of the region, **Kalamata** is a city immortalized in numerable Greek songs, with an appreciable cultural and commercial activity and the most important harbour of the Peloponnese after Patras. Messinia is the window of Greece to the Mediterranean and the world.



- **Climate**

Messinia has a characteristic mild, temperate climate (except of mountainous areas) as the annual thermometric range is approximately between 13 – 19°C. Messinia is one of the sunniest regions of Greece. Usually, it is raining in the winter and the summers are hot and dry.

Kalamata enjoys a mild, and wet climate in winter and dry and hot in summer. The maximum temperature ever recorded at Kalamata is 42,6°C and the minimum ever recorded is -5°C.

The excellent climatic conditions of Messinia make the area ideal for vacation 365 days a year!

- **How to access Messinia and Kalamata**

The international Airport of Kalamata “Captain Vasilis Constantakopoulos” is also connected to Athens, Thessaloniki and many other countries (France, U.K, Russia, Austria, Germany etc.)

Messinia, **Kalamata** is connected with Athens, through the New National Road of Athens-Tripoli-Kalamata. The distance is 238 km and the trip lasts about 2,30 hours

ABOUT MESSINIA

On the southwest end of the Peloponnese, with its rich natural landscape and its age long history, Messinia Prefecture, numbers, nowadays about 180.000 residents. The prefecture has all modern infrastructures of a hospitable place; thus, you can reach Messinia either by driving or by airplane.

The strong presence of the prefecture in history is obvious from the hundreds of monuments that are hidden in all of its areas. The extremely tall towers are still dominant in Mani's villages. The remains of the medieval Castles are harmonized with the natural landscape, while the remains of the ancient times confirm the references made to the area in Homer's works. Visit the local museums, which fully demonstrate this age long history!



A visit to Messinia prefecture includes excursions to the traditional villages of Mani, as well as explorations, by hiking or cycling, in the forests of Mount Taygetos. Enjoy the view from the highest mountain range of the Peloponnese and discover the small heavenly destinations that are hidden among its rocks! The bottom of the Messinian Gulf and its deep blue waters below the pine trees, make the experience unique.

As far as culture is concerned, the prefecture of Messinia has plenty of things to demonstrate, such as annual cultural events, art groups and active bodies that draw the attention of many visitors, by maintaining the local customs and traditions.

And, of course, the experience is completed by the delicious traditional cuisine, with flavours from Mani. The local production, with the domestic products, has spread the reputation of Messinia, even abroad. It is a very friendly area, ideal for jaunts!

ABOUT KALAMATA

- **Kalamata...Capital of Messinia**

Built at the foot of Mount Taygetos, Kalamata is characterized by the beauty of a seaside city, and it is an ideal summer destination, since its beach is four kilometers long. In the areas around the city, there are many of the best beaches in the Peloponnese. However, it is likewise a beautiful winter destination, since at Taygetos you can find anything you may be seeking for, during your winter holidays. The city has a variety of features, which can satisfy every visitor. Art lovers will find regular cultural events, while nature lovers can go hiking in the mountain. There are many sport centers, as well as cycle lanes in the biggest roads. The museums thoroughly present the history of Kalamata as well as of the wider area of Messinia, while the folklore and cultural societies, often revive many of the local customs.

The history of the city begins in the ancient times, since it is mentioned in Homer's works, with its ancient name, Pharai. This name derived from the legendary founder of the city, son of Hermes, Phari. However, during the ancient times, the importance of the city was not that great in the area, since it was still under the Laconian rule. The name Kalamata appears for the first

time in works of the 12th century and its origin is controversial. The most prevalent opinion argues that the city was named after the byzantine Monastery of Panagia Kalomata, which was probably located in area of the Castle. Other scholars, suggest that the name derived from the Greek word "kalamia" (reeds), meaning the reeds of River Nedontas. During the 13th century, the reputation of the city spreads, when it comes under the Frank rule, and it obtains its own castle. Two centuries later, Kalamata is under the Ottoman rule. For three centuries, approximately, the rule rotates between Ottomans and Venetians, until 1821, when the Greek Revolution was proclaimed in Kalamata. The liberation of the city and the proclaiming of the Revolution by Petrobey Mavromichalis on the 23rd of March, 1821, is the most significant event



in the long lasting history of Kalamata. After the construction of the port, at the end of the 19th century, the city gradually develops along with the commercial and manufacturing activity.

Nowadays, Kalamata has 60.000 residents, it is the second biggest city in the Peloponnese and one of the most popular touristic destinations, especially during the summer months.

The new **motorway Korinthos-Tripolis-Kalamata** which has reduced travel time to/from Athens and Thessaloniki, the new luxury Hotel Complex **Costa Navarino** which contributed to the upgrading of the Kalamata international airport "Captain Vasilis Konstantakopoulos" with national/international flights and the construction of major infrastructure projects have contributed to the recognition of the region and its placement on the world tourist map.

- **Local transports in Kalamata**

For bicycle lovers, the city has a big network of cycle lanes connecting the city with the beach and which is constantly being extended.

Urban bus lines and **taxi** are usually used for local transport throughout the city.

- **Where to stay**

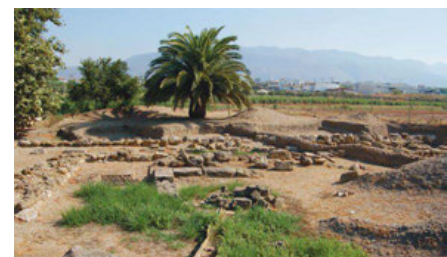
Messinia has dozens of high standards hotels in Kalamata and in all its cities offering the visitors a pleasant and comfortable stay

... in Kalamata

Horizon Blu	5*	27210 80099	www.horizonblu.gr
Classical e-Filoxenia	4*	27210 23166	www.classicalhotels.com
Elite City Resort	4*	2721022434	www.elite.com.gr
Pharae Palace	4*	27210 94420	www.pharae.gr
REX	4*	27210 21227	www.rexhotel.gr
Comfy Boutique	3*	27210 90128	www.comfyhotel.gr
Elektra Hotel & Spa	3*	27210 99100	www.elektrahotelspa.gr
Messinian Bay	3*	27210 41001	www.messinianbay.gr

- **Archaeological Sites**

Archaeological site of Akovitika: On the west of Kalamata, on the east side of river Aris, there is the Palace dating back to the 3rd millennium B.C., and proving the existence of some central authority in the area. The Palace of Akovitika included a central room and some smaller ones. Its architectural style is rather novel for its era and it refers to buildings which used to belong to people of the authority, who had an administrative power. Very close to the Palace, there is the Sanctuary of Poseidon, which dates back to the 6th century B.C., where there found inscriptions and offerings.



Ancient Thouria: It was the most important city of west Messinia and the second most important, after the



foundation of Ancient Messini. Its remains are found 10 kms away from Kalamata, on the north of the modern small market town Thouria. The first references to Thouria appear in Homer's works, meaning during the 8th century. The name of the city means brave and impetuous. During the ottoman rule, the area was named Kazas, while after the proclamation of the Revolution it was called Province of Mikromani, the capital of which is Mikromani. On the north side of the hill, where the city was built, a part of the ancient wall dating back to the 4th century

B.C. is visible. Other parts of the wall and the buildings have been found on the east and west side of the city, as well as parts of a cistern and temples. It is possible that the city also had a theatre.

- **Galleries - Museums**



Municipal Gallery of Kalamata “A.TASSOS”: In the historic centre of Kalamata, a renovated neoclassical mansion houses the Municipal Gallery. It was named after the Messinian engraver A. Tassos, because of the high number of works he has donated to the gallery. The collection, consisting exclusively of donations, includes 350 works of visual art mostly of the 1980’s. It mostly focuses on painting and sculpture but there are also remarkable engraved and ceramic artworks.

Gallery of Contemporary Greek Art: The Gallery was founded in 1962 on the initiative of the Popular Library of Kalamata and artist Kostas Giannoukopoulos. It is housed in specially designed areas of the Municipal Cultural Center, where are exhibited more than 100 works. The collection, which includes more than 430 works, consists of paintings, drawings, engravings, sculptures of important Greek artists of the 20th century as well as works of local artists.



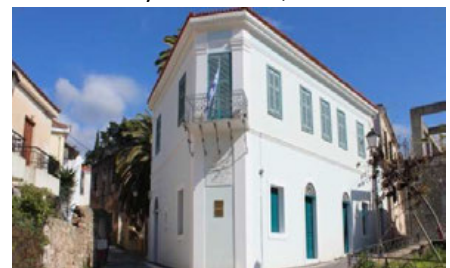
Archaeological Museum of Messinia: The Archaeological Museum of



Messinia is in the same building which housed the ancient Municipal Market of Kalamata, in the historical centre of the city. The exhibition covers the history and the civilization of the area, from the prehistoric period to the Byzantine period. The exhibits derive from excavations and researches and demonstrate the timeless character of the local civilization and the age long history of the area. The history of the prefecture is presented on its four large geographical divisions: Pylia, with the chamber tombs and the castles, Trifylia, with Nestor’s Palace, Messene, the capital of the Messinian state and Kalamata, mostly for the

Byzantine period. The Museum has the appropriate infrastructure to fully guide the visitors to their voyage in time; there is informative printed material while through the projection of videos and the possibility to use computers in the lobby, the visit becomes more interactive. There is also a special room for children who can participate in experiential games, by constructing a wall and a mosaic. The Museum can also host schools.

Historical and folklore museum of Kalamata: The museum is housed in a double- storeyed mansion, in the historic centre of Kalamata that was donated to the Municipality of Kalamata by Kyriakou family, for the Association for the Preservation of Arts& Letters. The ground floor of the museum creates a complete image of the pre-industrial lifestyle in Messinia. It is divided into thematic units, which represent the rural life, the manufacturing industry, the art of weaving and the pottery. At the second floor, there is the typesetting unit, since the first printing houses of liberated Greece were in Kalamata. In the same floor, there are also recreations of the traditional houses and coffee-houses of the city and finally there is a large room with objects from the Greek Revolution, as well as traditional costumes and works of the ecclesiastical and byzantine art.



Benakeio Archeological Museum of Kalamata: In the heart of the Historical Centre, it is accommodated in a beautiful residence of Venetian style built in 1742 and was donated by Antonios Benakis, founder of the homonym Museum in Athens. Some of the most important exhibits are a mosaic from Koroni with scenes from the worship of Dionysus, tomb, columns, sculptures of Hellenistic and Roman years, pillar-heads, discoveries from vaulted graves, jewels and stone objects from many regions of Messinia while in the garden of the museum a

stone sarcophagus and two burial jars are exhibited

Military Museum of Kalamata: The exhibition of the Museum aims to demonstrate the modern Greek history, from 1821 up to the present, through rich material. It includes costumes and material from the period of the Revolution and exhibits relevant to the Messinian Macedonian Fighters. The exhibition gradually continues to the present, referring in the meantime to the period of the Balkan Wars, the Asia Minor Catastrophe, World Wars I and II, to the National Resistance as well as to the peace-keeping expeditions of the country's military forces abroad.



Municipal Railway Park of Kalamata: It is a park in the centre of the Messinian capital, which operates as an open-air railway museum. Rambling around the park, the visitors can travel in time and discover the railway of the 19th and the 20th century. In a land plot of 54.000 square meters in area, in the place where the old railway station used to be, there is the station of the area and the double-storeyed station master's office, boarding platforms and a waiting hall. Faucets of vapor locomotives and steering – houses, a metallic pedestrian bridge, as well as other objects that were necessary for the organization of the railway station of that period are also exhibited..



- **Monuments**

The Castle of Kalamata: At the highest point of Kalamata, among the pine trees, there is the Castle of the city. Having survived through the course of time, the Castle of Kalamata bears the whole history of the city in its ruins. It offers a panoramic view of the city, from the historic centre to the Messinian Gulf, an ideal shot for photograph lovers.



According to mythology this was the hill where hero Pharis, after which the ancient city had been named Pharai, built the citadel. In the 6th century A.C. a Christian temple was built at the ancient ruins, which was later fortified by the Byzantines.

Consequently, the foundation of the castle is set in the byzantine period; however, the castle took its contemporary form in the beginning of the 13th century, when the area was under the Franc rule. During the period of the Ottoman rule the castle went through bombings, passed over to the Venetians for a period of time, and finally, after the 23rd of March, 1821, when the Revolution was proclaimed in the area, the castle belonged back to the city. There were also some modifications made, during the period of the Italian rule.

In its exterior yard, nowadays, you can see built-in ancient stones and some parts of the byzantine fortification and the byzantine temple. Some people identify this temple with Panagia Kalomata, after which the city was named. In the interior part of the castle, an amphitheatre has been created, which, during the summer months, hosts cultural events and the International Dance Festival of Kalamata.

- **Byzantine Monuments – Churches - Monasteries**



Temple of Saint Apostles

In the centre of the Messinian capital, at 23rd of March Square, the Temple of Saint Apostles is of great historical importance. Built during the Byzantine period, the temple has found a place in history, since it was there on the 23rd of March 1821 where the doxology for the liberation of Kalamata took place. At this first doxology, in a free territory, Th. Kolokotronis, P. Mavromichalis, Papaflessas, Nikitaras and other warriors of the Greek Revolution were present. The church was built in the beginning of the 14th century by Emperor Andronikos. It was of smaller size at first, but it is considered that subsequently it

was extended. The temple had to be restored, after the damages because of the strong earthquakes in 1892 and 1986. Currently, it belongs to the Holy Metropolis of Messinia and every year on the 23rd of March a doxology takes place in honour of the heroes of 1821. The customs also include the re-enactments of the liberation of the city, before the parade

The Metropolitan Cathedral of Kalamata “Ypapanti tou Sotirios” or “Presentation of the Savior”

In the historic centre of the city there is the Metropolitan Temple of Christ's Ypapanti, which is also the patron of Kalamata. The Byzantine Metropolitan and Cathedral Temple exist since 1873. In the temple, there is the miracle working icon of Panagia Ypapanti, the protectress of the people of Kalamata and of all the Messinians. Every year, on the 1st and 2nd of February there is a celebration and a litany of the icon in the centre of the town



The Monastery of Saint Konstantinos & Saint Eleni

The Monastery of St Konstantinos and St Eleni is in the city of Kalamata and it is also known as "Moni Kalograion" (Monastery of nuns), because it has always been a female monastery since its foundation. It was founded in 1796 and it has had an important charity activity, being really next to the society of the city. Apart from charities, the Monastery is also widely known for sericulture and the processing of silk. The handiworks of the nuns are unique and due to them many prizes have been awarded to the Monastery. There is a weaving-mill, a library as well as a shop in the Monastery. Moreover there is a vestry-museum, with mortal relics of Saints and artifacts, such as vestments, sacred vessels, icons and a part of the ancient iconostasis.

- Cultural events

International Dance Festival of Kalamata

The International Dance Festival of Kalamata, which started in 1995 has become an institution for the city and draws the attention of many people from all over the world. It takes place every July by the International Dance Centre of Kalamata and it is famous not only in the artistic world. The Festival addresses to dance students as well as to professional dancers, but also to the lovers of the 6th art. Artists from the whole planet, visitors from different places of the world gather in the city for the International Dance Festival. With dancing shows, training seminars, laboratories and lectures for dancers, the Festival has invited famous people of the field of dance, who came for their first time to Greece. So, it offers young dancers the opportunity to broaden their horizons and to obtain perspective, while at the same time it increases the artistic activity of the city. There are also publications as well as video dance productions made in the framework of the festival. The Festival takes place in the Dance Hall of Kalamata, the Amphitheatre of the Castle of Kalamata and in other places, such as the Municipal Cultural Centre, the National Stadium of the city etc. This big festival is another attraction of the city for many visitors during the summer.



The Carnival of Kalamata is a series of events that take place for ten days at the Capital of Messinia. The events end on the Sunday of Carnival with a great carnival parade in the city center with over 3500 participants with original costumes, imaginative floats.

The Carnival of Nedousa or Moutzourodeftera, takes place on “Kathara Deftera” (the Monday after the 4th and last Sunday of the Greek Carnival) at the village Nedousa and is one of the most authentic rural events organized in Greece today in a full and integrated form. Continuing a long tradition, the rural carnival of Nedousa is an authentic group ceremony of magical and dramatic character to ensure “evetiria”, a kind of folk theatre, which consists of a series of acts and in which there are no spectators, but only co-celebrants. Main features of the carnival are the primitive disguises, the group smudging against the evil eye, the “Agermos” (visit of the "theatrical group" to all homes), Dance of the Goats, the Arotriasi (symbolic plowing and sowing of the village square), the Wedding (the bride and groom fall in love on the "plowed" square), the Funeral, the Mourning and the Resurrection.

Saitopolemos (Dart-War) in Kalamata

One of the most popular customs in Kalamata, which is still preserved with great participation of the people, is the so-called "Saitopolemos". Every year, on Easter Sunday, in the evening the crowds of people who hold darts ("saitologoi") gather at the west beach of the city. With paper darts that they have made themselves, filled with gunpowder, the participants wear traditional costumes and revive the custom. According to the legend the darts were used by the Messinians, in order to face the Turkish cavalry, during the period of the Revolution. Even nowadays, the event attracts the interest of the people of the city, who even if they do not participate watch the spectacle.



Festivals for local products are held during the summer months in the villages of the Messinian capital, offering guests unique flavors and fun moments. Feast of edible olives, figs, watermelon, wine, etc.

KALAMATA IN ONE DAY

9.00 Get started from the historical centre of the city. Visit the chapel of the Holy Apostles, where the war for independence from the Turks was declared. Walk around the lanes and you will discover charming images of yesterday and some of the finest buildings of the city, housing the archaeological Museum of Messinia, the Mpenakio archaeological museum, the municipal art gallery and the folklore museum.

12.00 Uphill to the Castle, monastery of saint Konstantinos and Eleni (1796), where the nuns continue till nowadays to texture the famous silk handkerchiefs and to the city Byzantine rhythm Cathedral church “Ypapanti”. Downhill to the pedestrian Aristomenous Street with the stores, the Town Hall, the cultural center and library. Walk after the central square with dozens of cafes, directed to the municipal Railway Park (recreational area and outdoors Railway Museum) and continue towards the Harbour, one of the most important of the entire country, a symbol of economical growth that the city experienced.

14.00 It is a good idea to lunch at the marina of the city, which lies nearby, enjoying the sea view.

17.00 Return for coffee at the central square or ... explore the shops around. If you are interested in the traditional products of the region, get a little more further to the historic centre and you will discover thousands of surprises! Do not forget to buy Kalamata olives, olive oil, wine, driedfigs, pastelia (Honey sesame snack), raisins, sausages flavoured with orange..., ceramics and various objects.

21.00 In the evening all roads lead to the historical centre or to coastal boulevard “Navarinou” with countless traditional and modern restaurants, ouzo meze bars, snack and bars at the seafront overlooking the Taygetos Mountain.



ENJOY THE CRYSTAL DEEP BLUE WATERS OF KALAMATA, MESSINIA

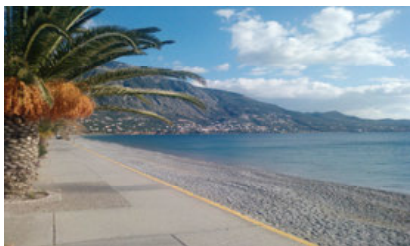
With 140 km of coastline, embraced by a crystal sea, Messinia is surrounded by the deep Messinian Gulf on the one side and the Ionian Sea on the other. There are tens of beaches, with a medieval atmosphere, either organized or simply washed in the Deep Blue and the light of the Mediterranean, that constitute a challenge for you to discover.

- **The Coast of Kalamata**

The long coastline of 10.3 km and the extensive beach characterized by clear waters and organized beaches are particularly important for the natural landscape. The waters and coasts of the Messinian Gulf have been many times awarded with the Blue Flag (award for clean beaches).



Beach of Kalamata



The coast is one of the most beautiful places of Kalamata. It stretches over a distance of 2.5 km and you can reach it in a few minutes even walking from the city center. This long and beautiful coast with palm trees, and coloured umbrellas has been awarded with the Blue Flag (award for clean beaches). The beach is of sandstone, deepens smoothly and is ideal for swimming and lying under the sun.

Beach of Mikra Mantinea and Almyros

These are pebble beaches 6-7 km far from the city of Kalamata. They are very popular and crowded and are ideal for water sports. These magnificent beaches have many beach bars, taverns



Beach of Santova Avia

Situated 12 km far from the city of Kalamata, the beach of Santova is



one of the most cosmopolitan beaches of the region. The beach is covered with fine sand and small pebbles and all along it, there are beach bars. Santova is the most popular beach of the Municipality

- **The Marina of Kalamata**

With a view to the Taygetos Mountain, the Marina operates next to the main port since 1998, at a short distance from the centre of Kalamata. It is a sophisticated marina at the west side of the city, with a capacity of 255 spaces for boats.



It provides visitors with water and electricity, as well as refueling, change of spare parts and mechanical repairs upon command. The entrance size is around 25 meters and its depth varies from 1,90 to 2,40 meters, open to boats up to 15 meters long, of maximum size 25 meters and maximum draught 3 meters. All the spaces are equipped with electricity and water supplies. The land area includes 150 spaces for boats, which are lifted and launched with a modern travel lift 60 tons heavy. The marina and external crews and technicians provide complete services of

boat repairing and maintenance, Land structure include even structures of surface 860m² for shops, refueling station, WC and showers. It is open all year long.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES IN KALAMATA

Cycling Tours from seaside and fishing villages to archaeological and historic sites

Free Diving to discover the underwater world of Messinian Gulf

Hiking Tours to discover the beauty of Messinia

River Trekking to discover abundant flora, majestic waterfalls and gurgling crystal clear waters revealing an unparalleled natural beauty.

Sea Kayaking all along the Messinian coastline

Water Sports as Jet Ski, water ski, surfing etc

Horse Riding at Kalamata's mountains and beaches

Historical City Center Tour



LOCAL GASTRONOMY

Messinia is the ultimate gastronomic tourist destination!!

Here you'll find recipes and food with centuries of history! You will learn about the nutritional habits of the local people and the products that give health and longevity!

You will discover the most important products of Messinia, the Kalamata olives and Messinian olive oil but also products of unique quality like fine cheese, sweets with honey and sesame (pasteli), different varieties of wine, figs, raisins, honey, handmade sausages flavored with orange, etc.



WHERE TO GO FOR LUNCH AND DINNER

To the Marina, enjoying the sea view, at the Historical Center with small restaurants and traditional plates, at the Coastal Boulevard "Navarinou" with countless traditional and modern restaurants, ouzo meze bars at the seafront overlooking the Taygetos Mountain, at the village "Verga" on the mountain with view to the Messinian Gulf, at Mikri Mantinia and village "Kitries" for lovers of fresh fish.

WHAT TO SEE IN OTHER MUNICIPALITIES OF MESSINIA

The region of Messinia is rich in history, significant archaeological, byzantine and modern monuments, cosmopolitan or idyllic beaches and unknown to the general public ecological havens. Messinia can satisfy a vast variety of choices. Traditional paths lead back to time and in the same time brings you close to the nature

- **Messinia, a living museum of Hellenic history ...**

Ancient Messini, one of the most well preserved ancient Greek cities (4th century BC), the capital of ancient Messinia for seven centuries. It is a rare archaeological site, with temples, houses, walls and public buildings, most of which are maintained in a very good condition.



The temple of Epikourios Apollo, lost in the wild landscape, appears as the "second Parthenon", one of the most important and well preserved temples of antiquity and included in the World List of Monuments of Cultural Heritage in 1986. It was built in the 5th century by Iktinos, the genius architect of the Parthenon.

The Palace of Nestor

It is the popular name of the Mycenaean Palace of Upper Eglianos - as it is called by the archaeologists - which reminds us of the homeric narrations about the wise king of Pylos. The palace flourished from 1300 up to 1200 B.C.



- **The castles and towers of Messinia**

Long-term wars and the position of Messinia at the edge of the Greek peninsula, led to the fortification of many cities with impressive castles which survived until today, constructed according to the war technology and fortification art of their time with facilities that impressed us with their architecture.

Castles of Koroni: built on the ruins of ancient Asini, it stands in the centre of the current settlement and constitutes an example of fortification technique.

Castle of Methoni: built by the Venetians in a small peninsula on the ruins of the ancient city, this castle is one of the most impressive castles in Greece.

Castle of the Giants of Kyparissia: built during the Byzantine years. Today, the castle is called the "Castle of Giants" and overlooks the entire town

Niokastro of Pylos: it is one of the best preserved castles of Greece built during the Turkish occupation in 1573

Mani Towers: Mani is well known for its towers (17-18 century), many of which still exist. Built with natural materials of the area, they are perfectly harmonized with the landscape.

Vaulted tombs Peristeria: It is an important archaeological site and the size of its buildings is dating from the 2nd millennium B.C. Up today, the main discoveries of Peristeria are 4 vaulted tombs, a part of the Palace and a lot of houses. The tombs of Peristeria hid in their interior many objects, such as jewels and objects of everyday life, which are exhibited in the Archaeological Museum of Chora.

