

**ROUTES**  
**in cross-border region**  
**Thassos – Garmen**



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## **From the “Green island Thassos” to the “Green Rhodopes adventure”**

The Thassos – Garmen region is located in south-eastern part of Europe, at the crossroads between the East and the West, the North and the South.

The area is characterized by a diverse topography and is rich in natural landmarks. To the south, the region bathes in the waters of the Aegean Sea, while to the North it reaches the mountain massifs of the Rhodopes and Rila. The picturesque coastlines of Thassos look like lace, shaped by the crystal blue waters of the Aegean. In this region nature is exceptionally beautiful, with well-preserved rare plants and animal species. Pretty, thick, virgin forests and scenic forest paths, extremely rich in flora and fauna, draw the gentle slopes of the Rhodope Mountains. Snow-covered, sparkling-white mountain peaks and slopes, mountain gorges, plateaus and grasslands. Enchantingly beautiful caves with underground lakes and rivers, colourful plains and virgin nature bring the feeling of timelessness.

This place is marked by the millennial history of human development!

Prehistoric and traditional villages, ancient cities and temples, medieval castles, architectural monuments. Ancient Greece, Philip of Macedonia, Alexander the Great and the Thracians, Rome, Byzantium, and the Ottoman Empire later on, have left their mark on the history of the area. There are numerous religious temples and monasteries. Arts and culture, myths, manners and customs, countless festivals, folk traditions and activities have had their influence on this ancient land.

The modern picturesque towns and villages, still full of life, ensure tourist infrastructure capable of attracting the attention of visitors from around the world, and provide multiple options for alternative tourism.

The hospitable residents of this extraordinary beautiful place in the Balkans welcome you throughout the year, so that you discover the unique natural resources, history, customs and culture.

## Route 2 „Thassos, the Green Island”

The suggested route – a tour of the island – could be of interest to the widest range of visitors – children, adolescents, adults, and professional groups (cultural anthropologists, folklorists, etc.) In its basic form, the route has been developed as an organized one but it could freely be applied to individual tourist visits. It can be adapted to alternative types of tourism, such as bicycling, walking, rural, culinary or pilgrim tourism.

### Thassos. Another Word for Vacation

Wherever someone will travel to, Thassos is the island they will never forget, because this magical island fills everyone with a sense of joy and happiness from the very moment they arrive. It has been called “Emerald Island”, “Green Diamond of the Aegean” and many other names that are probably excessive to people who have not visited the island yet. But when someone arrives here, they find themselves at a loss for words to describe the experience of their vacation.

For many centuries, this Lady of the Northern Aegean never ceased to offer pleasure and wonderful moments. It is the seashores made of pale blue to dark green. It is the forests with their blessed coolness. It is the hospitality of its inhabitants that worship their land and honour their visitors. It is in plenty of other things as well that will make your visit here the first of many. Because no one can ever have enough of Thassos, as many times as they visit. The happiness, calmness, relaxation and fun make Thassos a source for good and carefree moments.

### History

In the beginning of 7th century BC, Thassos first appears as a colony of Parians. The father of history, Herodotus, argues that Phoenicians had already settled here many years before. Based on Herodotus, Thassos owes its name to Phoenician King Aginor's son Thassos. According to mythology he arrived on the island looking for his sister Europe, who was abducted by Zeus. After 5th century BC the Hellenic Thassian State flourished and earned the title of «Athens of North». Aiming to exploit the rich gold deposits of Mount Paggeo, the Thassians founded Krinides in 360 BC, at the slopes of the gold bearing mount. Twenty years later however, Thassos was occupied by Philip 2nd and annexed to Macedonian State. The Romans who came after Macedonians in 197 BC, arrived in Thassos and were accepted as liberators since the Roman legions did not destroy but contributed to commercial activities restart and gave new privileges to its inhabitants. Heading to Philippi, Apostle Paul passed offshore the island in 52 AC, and possibly landed on the island in order to plant the first seeds of Christianity. A long period of time followed during which Thassos became the apple of discord for many conquerors. Two years after the fall of Constantinople it finally ended in hands of the Ottomans. In 1813 the Vizier of Egypt Mohamed Ali became the owner of Thassos, a fact that marked the beginning of another enlightening period for the island. During the years of his occupation, a place full of freedom was created for the island residents, which was reversed once more in 1902 when Thassos came again under the domination of Turks and was finally liberated by Admiral Pavlos Kountouriotis. The island was integrated to Hellas in 1912.

### Culture

Nowadays a considerable amount of cultural manifestations are organised by Thassos Municipality and carried out on a daily basis. Concerts and theatrical performances are carried out in Limenas ancient theatre, the ancient sanctuary of Dioscouri in Alyki, the Ancient Agora of Limenas, the Metallia (Mines) of Limenaria, Kazaviti, Panagia and Potamia. Concerts of traditional and modern music

are organised in all villages and on camping grounds of the island. Many cultural manifestations are performed in the framework of «Kazavitiana», take place in Mikro Kazaviti and «spread out» throughout July and August. You will definitely live a unique experience visiting Thassos during the Carnival period. The famous carnival of the island, taking place in Panagia, is a real tribute to Dionysus. The organisation of this historic carnival belongs to the Cultural Society of «Bacchus» and the challenge along with the indiscretions and red wine that abundantly runs, are its basic features.

Thassos Carnival is also celebrated with floats in Potamia, theatrical performances full of live local colours in Kalirachi and the King Carnival burning in Rachoni.

## Tradition

All year round, festivities are carried out during the celebration of the Saints and in their Grace churches and country churches were built. Their basic features are the cooking and treating of visitors with the traditional «courbani», which is prepared with boiled meat and crumbled wheat. However, where the festivity of festivities is taking place and «courbani» is prepared in incredible quantities due to thousands of visitors, is Panagia on the 15th of August.

You must not forget that the name of the village before the church was «Anastasimo» and was renamed to «Panagia» soon after the church was built.

One of most beloved folklore events of the island is the representation of a Thassian Wedding in Theologos. A large pomp starts from «bride's» house going all around the village back streets. The feasting and dancing reach their peak at the village's stadium where the participants enjoy the traditional foods and desserts.

Another custom of the island is called «Gia vrex Aprili m» (Rain my April) and it takes place in Limenaria the second day of Easter. It is an essential festivity where the residents pray to God to send them rain to water their vineyards and have good wine produce. A similar custom is "Anavrochiaris" relating to the summer drought occurs every year on July 31 in the village of Potamia.

The night of Easter Judas's Burning takes place in Panagia. The Thassians, people of great respect for their tradition and history, succeeded in protecting their festivities and did not let them be reformed into simple tourist attractions removing or adding elements that would make them more attractive. This gives visitors the opportunity to come in touch with pure tradition and apart from amusement, they gain knowledge.

## ROUTES ON THE ISLAND OF THASSOS – A Tour of the Island



Departure from Kavala or Keramoti by ferryboat and arrival at the port of Limenas.

### Limenas

Starting point (A)	Limenas <i>Tourists call it Thassos</i>	+40° 46' 48.40", +24° 42' 33.52" (40.780110, 24.709310)
End point (B)	Skala Rachoni	+40° 46' 50.84", +24° 36' 50.40" (40.780790, 24.614000)
Means of transportation	Car	
Distance	11.2 km, 15 min.	

Since ancient years Limenas has been the most important town of the island. Being the capital of the island, with the Town Hall and central administrative services, but also the biggest market, Limenas has been transformed to a modern town keeping its tradition very well protected. Limenas began to take its modern shape from the middle of 10th AC century due to inhabitants of other villages, but mainly those of Panagia, while refugees from Minor Asia who settled here in 1922 contributed to its essential development and progress. Its constant development has turned Limenas into an international tourist attraction. Picturesque narrow streets, challenging promenades that one cannot

resist. Beautiful small shops, inviting you in with their fine pieces of work. Fish-taverns and cosy hang outs giving off the smell of ouzo keep the visitor up until day lighting for the first rendezvous with the marvellous sunrise. The nightlife, a match for most socialite islands of Aegean, with the voices of youngsters and loud music, keep the night awake. A strong cultural life, archaeological sites and amazing beaches make Limenas a first class choice of vacations for thousands of people arriving here from all around the world.

### Rachoni – Skala Rachoni

Starting point (B)	Skala Rachoni (B)	+40° 46' 50.84", +24° 36' 50.40" (40.780790, 24.614000)
End point (C)	Prinos	+40° 44' 29.04", +24° 34' 33.24" (40.741400, 24.575900)
Means of transportation	Car	
Distance	6.5 km, 14 min.	

The first village you meet after Limenas heading westwards is Skala Rachoni. Traditional ouzeri and an endless sandy beach is the scenery of this coast. Heading to Ypsario you pass through the villages of Rachoni and Agios Georgios that are recommended for a break at their picturesque cafes. Rachoni has the oldest olive groves of the island. It's an opportunity for a visitor to obtain olive oil and honey.

### Prinos – Skala Prinos

Starting point (C)	Prinos	+40° 44' 29.04", +24° 34' 33.24" (40.741400, 24.575900)
End point (D)	Megalo (Big) Kazaviti	+40° 43' 20.28", +24° 37' 5.88" (40.722300, 24.618300)
Means of transportation	Car	
Distance	4.7 km, 10 min.	

The pine-trees of this area, known also as «Dassylio» (Small Wood), are literally rising from sea. Skala Prinos along with Prinos are almost united nowadays due to the area's great development. Many visitors buy biological olive oil called "Kardiofyllo".

### Mikro (Small) and Megalo (Big) Kazaviti

Starting point (D)	Megalo (Big) Kazaviti	+40° 43' 20.28", +24° 37' 5.88" (40.722300, 24.618300)
End point (E)	Skala Sotiros	+40° 43' 43.28", +24° 32' 53.27" (40.728690, 24.548130)
Means of transportation	Car	
Distance	7.3 km, 10 min.	

It is difficult to find mountain villages with such beauty. They are only five hundred meters away from each other and few kilometres from Prinos. Remarkable are their history and their offerings during the times of pirates who invaded the coasts of the island. The visitor will have the opportunity here to admire the stone-made mansions with their wooden balconies and painted ceilings that have survived many hardships. A coffee at the square, the local goat kid, and delicacies of the villages' taverns is another strong motive for anyone to visit this very beautiful area.

## Skala Sotiros – Sotiras

Starting point (E)	Skala Sotiros	+40° 43' 43.28", +24° 32' 53.27" (40.728690, 24.548130)
End point (F)	Kalirachi	+40° 41' 35.81", +24° 33' 15.19" (40.693280, 24.554220)
Means of transportation	Car	
Distance	5,3 km, 10 min.	

Its inhabitants resisted but finally decided to share the beauties of their place with the tourists. Skala is in constant development, and the most well informed ones climb up to Sotiras to meet with tradition and honour its flavours. The village is famous for its mild, dry climate, a remedy for those who suffer from humidity. People, who are familiar with Thassos secrets, buy their bread from a bakery in Skala. Its taste is unforgettable.

## Kalirachi – Skala Kalirachi

Starting point (F)	Kalirachi	+40° 41' 35.81", +24° 33' 15.19" (40.693280, 24.554220)
End point (G)	Skala Maries	+40° 38' 34.44", +24° 30' 57.49" (40.642900, 24.515970)
Means of transportation	Car	
Distance	9 km, 15 min.	

In the serpentine small streets of this mountain village, the Thassian architecture is making its name better than ever. The Folklore Museum that hosts its treasures is housed in a very **beautiful mansion. On the amazing beach of «Klisma» settled with round pebbles you can** enjoy swimming, taste good "mezes" and fresh fish in the taverns all around it.

## Maries – Skala Maries

Starting point (G)	Skala Maries	+40° 38' 34.44", +24° 30' 57.49" (40.642900, 24.515970)
Transitional point (H)	Maries 12 km, 15 min.	+40° 41' 25.80", +24° 37' 17.04" (40.690500, 24.621400)
End point (I)	Limenaria	+40° 37' 38.78", +24° 34' 29.39" (40.627440, 24.574830)
Means of transportation	Car	
Distance	Maries – Limenaria 9.1 km, 12 min.	

For those who wish to find out how the Greek villages looked like before the era of organised tourism, Maries is a unique opportunity. The view towards the sunset leaves everyone utterly speechless. The freshest fish dominate Skala's picturesque small taverns. «Aspas» beach is a small bay with very clean waters and sugary sand; the visitors are few and special.

## Limenaria

Starting point (I)	Limenaria	+40° 37' 38.78", +24° 34' 29.39" (40.627440, 24.574830)
End point (J)	Potos	+40° 36' 37.44", +24° 36' 27.36" (40.610400, 24.607600)
Means of transportation	Car	
Distance	4 km, 6 min.	



From Trypiti bay up to Kalyvia Settlement, the biggest town of the island harbours many hotels, rooms to let, and an exciting nightlife. The offices of German Company «Speidel», known as «Palataki», are a sample of 20th century excellent architecture. On Metalia (Mines) beach the abandoned mines serve ones fantasy with unbelievable dedication offering the visitor an experience that would be difficult to relive.

## Potos

Starting point (J)	Potos	+40° 36' 37.44", +24° 36' 27.36" (40.610400, 24.607600)
End point (K)	Theologos	+40° 39' 30.60", +24° 41' 28.68" (40.658500, 24.691300)
Means of transportation	Car	
Distance	10.2 km, 11 min.	

Exquisite, lively, with many options for amusement, Potos doesn't let anyone be discontent. The sea sports and dancing, the beach bars music rhythms are characteristic of this marvellous beach, with its picturesque small taverns standing next to waves, just add to the landscape. One kilometre away is Pefkari, the very beautiful bay where the pine trees are literally growing inside the sea!

## Theologos

Starting point (K)	Theologos	+40° 39' 30.60", +24° 41' 28.68" (40.658500, 24.691300)
End point (L)	Monastery of Archangel Michael 24.2 km 26 min.	+40° 35' 50.28", +24° 42' 6.84" (40.597300, 24.701900)
End point (M)	Alyki 5 km 5 min.	(40.6054, 24.7405)
Means of transportation	Car	
Distance	Km, min.	

It used to be the island's largest village until the middle of last century, and still counts a lot of inhabitants. Its financial development through the centuries resulted to residences of high aesthetic value. Since 1979 it has been characterised as a traditional settlement. Apart of its beauty, Theologos is also famous for its unique and delicious "goat kid" offered in the area's taverns. Those who come here, never lose the opportunity to try it. In the wider area of Theologos it is worth a visit to the settlements of Astris, just a few kilometres from Potos, with Giola the sea lake of indescribable beauty and Koinyra with the countless lovers of their beach the Paradise, one of most famous beaches in Greece.

## The Monastery of Archangel Michael

Nowadays there are plenty of historic shrines on the island. The Monastery of Assumption stands a little bit above the village of Maries. Athos on the opposite side, with its endless greenery works wonders on people's «clenched» soul. Miracles are not needed here. The vigil in the monastery fills the heart with God making the pursuit of evidences a completely unnecessary procedure. The Monastery of Archangel Michael is the biggest and also the most known Monastery of Thassos. Part of the Holy Nail that Christ was crucified with, is preserved here. The monastery is built on the edge of a cliff and the view towards the Aegean Sea gives pilgrims the sense of being suspended. One more pew of intellectual uplift stands in the Monastery of Agios Panteleimonas. You can reach it by Mikro Kazaviti, Sotiras or Maries villages. There is a homonymous Church dedicated to Assumption in Panagia village,



fully connected with the life of village residents. The visitor is in awe when facing the old icons (14th - 17th century), the icon of Panagia i Pantovlepousa (Virgin Mary and old coins of Panagia known as "bakires". The red-and-white pennon of Richard the Lionhearted since the era of Crusaders stands also inside the church.

## Alyki

Starting point (M)	Alyki 5 km 5 min.	(40.6054, 24.7405)
End point (N)	Kinira	+40° 39' 56.52", +24° 45' 42.48" (40.665700, 24.761800)
Means of transportation	Car	
Distance	11 km, 10 min.	

The small fishing village of Alyki, perhaps the most beautiful place on the coast of Thassos, is located in the southeast end of the island. There are two bays (the first one called the "Bay of Mermaids") and a small but long peninsula (known as the "Sacred rock of Thassos"), which separates them. The remains of a pagan temple and many buildings dating to the 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC suggest that in ancient times Alyki used to have much more residents. Alyki is also the name of the beach. Just above it there is a parking lot. On the cape there are old marble quarries and ruins of an ancient temple from the 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC. Since the village is located on a hill, its top reveals a beautiful sea view.

The south bay is a narrow sand strip with very shallow, warm water. Near the trees on the beach there are several restaurants. The north beach is smaller and rocky, not so frequently visited.

## Kinira

Starting point (N)	Kinira	+40° 39' 56.52", +24° 45' 42.48" (40.665700, 24.761800)
End point (O)	Potamia	+40° 43' 0.48", +24° 43' 45.84" (40.716800, 24.729400)
Means of transportation	Car	
Distance	11 km, 11 min.	

The village of the same name is located in the Kinira area which is mentioned as early as in the texts of Herodotus. According to legends, the hetaerae Leda bathed in the area today called "Lutro" on her way to Corinth. It is in this area of Thassos where the famous gold mines of the island were located. There are remains of Byzantine baths, as well as an old-Christian basilica. Near Kinira is the famous beach Paradisos.

## Potamia – Skala Potamias

Starting point (O)	Potamia	+40° 43' 0.48", +24° 43' 45.84" (40.716800, 24.729400)
End point (P)	Panagia	+40° 43' 53.04", +24° 43' 36.84" (40.731400, 24.726900)
Means of transport	Car	
Distance	3 km, 5 min.	

Green! The ruling image, which impresses all as soon as they arrive in Potamia. Those who love mountain climbing can begin their conquest of Ypsario's highest peak here. Thousands of visitors come to Skala Potamia every summer to unite the mountain with the sea. The coastal road full of taverns, bars and cafés ends at the area's small harbour with the imposing Tarsanas (Boatyard), built in 19th century by the monks of Agion Oros (Athos). Potamia was built on a hillside and the village got its name from a small river that flows through it. The residents' main occupation is tourism and agriculture. In the village there is also a museum of Polygnotus Vagis, a well-known sculptor, highly acclaimed in America. Nowadays, his works are exhibited in many museums.

### Panagia (Virgin Mary)

Starting point (P)	Panagia	+40° 43' 53.04", +24° 43' 36.84" (40.731400, 24.726900)
End point (A)	Limenas	+40° 46' 48.40", +24° 42' 33.52" (40.780110, 24.709310)
Means of transportation	Car	
Distance	8 km, 10 min.	

Panagia (Virgin Mary), apart from Her Name, donated to the village everything one could ask for. Historic is its oak-tree that covers the square. Running waters come cold from the mountains. Although the village's Skala (Berth) is called Avlakia, many people consider the marvellous Chryssi Ammoudia (Golden Sandy Beach) with its unique sunrise as its beach. You have to taste the area's delicacies - various meats with particular preference, the "goat kid" - as well as the homemade spoon-desserts.

### Beaches

Strong winds never blow on the beaches of Thassos, unlike all the other islands of the Aegean sea. They are safe since most of them are organised and do not hide surprises in their depths that progressively deepen. The access to all beaches of the island is very easy due to a good road network, and for most rugged ones there are paths leading to their bosom in safety. Whenever you wish to take a cool dip, you can do so at your nearest beach, since the sea waters are very clean all around the island.

The most known ones are Makryammos, Pachys, Glyfada, Papalimani, Nysteri, Chryssi Ammoudia in Skala Panagias, Chryssi Akti in Skala Potamias, Koinyra, Paradise, Thimonia, Alyki, Psili Ammos, Astris, Akti Potos, Pefkari, Akti Limenaris, Trypiti, Skala Maries, Akti Kalirachi, Akti Sotiros and Akti Alsilio in Skala Prinos. Smaller bays with hidden sandy beaches and absolute calmness are also offered for acquaintance and quiet moments of pleasure.

### Sports and Other Activities

Swimming, rackets, deck-chair,... the consumption of good food and clubbing are the most popular pastimes during vacations. Equally popular is also the «traditional» shopping of folk-art articles, such as the famous handmade textiles for house decoration, the traditional desserts, honey, olives and olive oil that has earned its reputation just like any product that respects itself. Since Thassos offers opportunities even for... regular sports, shouldn't you take advantage of them?

Boats and special equipment are awaiting enthusiasts of water-skiing on the we 11-organised beaches of the island. The waves in Paradise beach offer you a unique chance for a different kind of wind surfing. Jet ski, banana and sea parachute, can be found in most organised beaches. Apart of the

sports performed on «sea foam», there are those that request depths. A depth full of fish and wonderful pictures that favour diving as well as fishing with a rifle-harpoon. The ambitious anglers may try their luck in fishing with a fishing rod or line wherever they like in Thassos, even from their vehicles! For those who prefer sports offshore, there are many tennis grounds in organised hotels and camping grounds. Those who love forests and ecological walks can climb Ypsario, a challenging mountain to conquer for mountain climbers and hikers alike, who can reach its peak through some very nice and emerald green paths.

## **A Pilgrimage Tour**

Just like in any other part of Greece, Orthodoxy is deeply rooted in Thassos. Ossios Daniel arrived in Thassos a few years after the times of Iconoclasm and retired to an island's cave until the Thassians discovered his holiness and dozens of them asked him to let them stay by him. It was then that the first coenobium was established on the island. He is registered in hagiology as Ossios Daniel of Thassos and our Church celebrates his memory on September 12th. In 1652 Thassos acquired its second Saint. Saint Neomartyr Ioannis, fourteen years old, found himself from Thassos to Constantinople. There and in spite of all offers made by the Great Vizier, he denied converting religion. The order for his execution was immediate.

## **You Must Visit!**

### **Ancient Thassos**

Walking a few meters away from the ancient Harbour, in front of the Archaeological Museum stands the Ancient Agora, where excavations brought many monuments to light. One of the most important is the Diodoros of Thean (the Thoroughfare of Gods), which was built in 470 BC and formed a great building complex. In 1836, the French traveller E. Miller brought its bas-reliefs to the Louvre Museum where they still stand. Another important monument is Glaucus the 1<sup>st</sup> Grave who arrived in Thassos along with Parians in 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC.

We also mention the cyclical altar of Theagenis, the famous Thassian athlete who is said to have won 1.400 victories in the Panhellenic Games, the Odeum and the paleochristian basilica of Agora, 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. Following a small cobbled road we reach the Ancient Theatre of Thassos, which has been located there since the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC as Hippocrates informs us. During the summer months the Ancient Theatre of Thassos hosts performances of ancient drama. A bit north is the Acropolis. On its east wall a supernatural half-finished rams bearing Kouros (Adolescent) of 3.50 m height was found in 1920. The sightseeing of Thassos ancient town ends with a visit to Archaeological Museum where important pieces are housed.

### **Vagi's Museum**

Dedicated to worldwide famous Thassian sculptor Polygnotos Vagis, it is founded in his birthplace, Potamia and hosts a great part of his work.

### **Alyki**

Apart from being one of the most beautiful landscapes of Thassos, Alyki is also a significant archaeological site where the visitor can admire many ancient and medieval monuments. Since the 6<sup>th</sup>

century BC to 6th century AD, at the edge of Alyki peninsula there used to be marble quarries, signs of which are still visible nowadays.

### **Palataki (Small Palace)**

One of most characteristic sights of Limenaria, Palataki dominates upon a rocky ledge towards the sea. This two-floored building comprises a sample of an elaborate architecture and was built in 1903 by the German Company Speidel, which was exploiting the island's mines at that time.

### **Kastro (Castle)**

The most ancient settlement of the island, built 800 m high up on one of Ypsario Mountain's peaks. It flourished during the times the Aegean was raided by pirates. Its abandonment came in the early days of 20<sup>th</sup> century when its inhabitants became workers at the mines of the German Company Speidel and established Limenaria.