

Natural wonders of Greece , A short presentation.



March 2016

Maria Kalliga, Nefeli Kotretsou, Dimitris Vargiamidis, Vangelis Voulgaridis

On the way to Pobiedziska, Poland (10-17 April 2016).

The petrified forest of Lesvos island

The Petrified Forest of Lesvos is a petrified forest ecosystem made up of large concentrations of fossilized trees and animals which were covered by volcanic material and petrified in place 18 million years ago.

The protected area of the Petrified Forest covers an area of 150 km². This region could be characterized as a window on the geohistoric development of the Aegean over the last 20 million years.



The petrified Forest Park of Lesvos island



A tour of the Petrified Forest Park, an unparalleled monument around the world, is a unique experience. The plethora of standing fossilized trunks, and their excellent state of preservation impresses visitors. The Petrified Forest is a founding member of the European Geoparks Network and since 2004 a member of the Global Geoparks Network of UNESCO.

The petrified Forest Park of Lesvos island

- Visitors to the park can tour an entire mountainside along specially constructed trails. During the tour visitors can view the unique displays of Protopinaceae, ancestors of the modern-day pine tree, grouped in small clusters. Most of the fossilized trunks belong to the Taxodiaceae, forerunners of the present-day sequoia which grows on the west coast of the United States. The largest lying coniferous trunk (longer than 20 meters) and the large standing sequoia trunks belong to this family.



Meteora

The Meteora rocks were formed about 60 million years ago during the Paleogene Period. Their current shape is due to the weathering, the erosion and the tectonic factors. Beside the Pindos Mountains, at the western region of the Thessaly, in the middle of northern Greece, these sandstone rocks rise from the ground. The nearest town is Kalambaka.

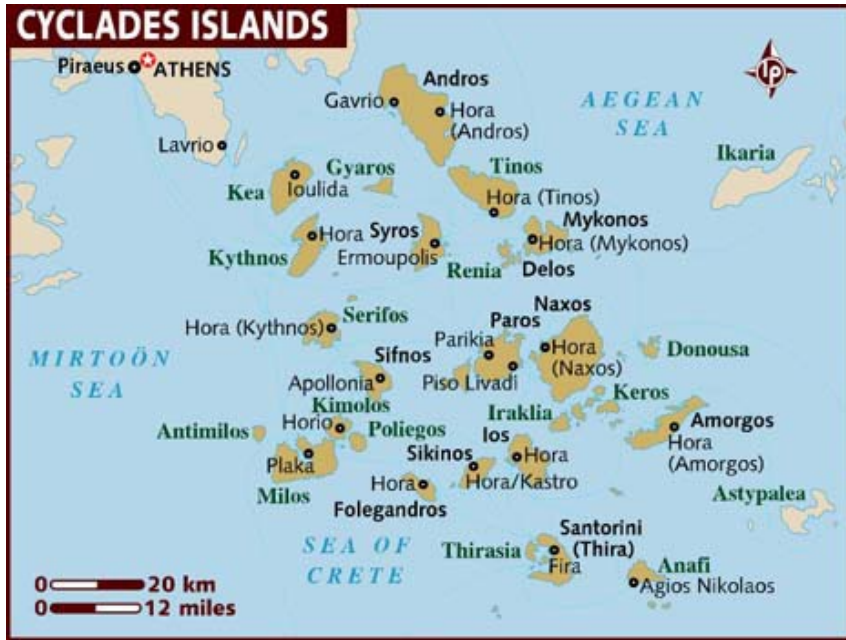




Meteora

The word meteora means literally "middle of the sky", "suspended in the air". Six monasteries sit on top of sandstone rock pillars. Meteora is recognized by the UNESCO as one of its Heritage Sites since 1981

Santorini/Thera - Caldera (volcanic crater)



Santorini is an island in the southern Aegean Sea, about 200 km (120 mi) southeast of Greece's mainland. It is the largest island of a small, circular archipelago which bears the same name and is the remnant of a volcanic caldera. The island of Santorini is essentially what remains after an enormous volcanic eruption that destroyed the earliest settlements on a formerly single island and created the current geological caldera (volcanic crater). The depth of the caldera, at 400m, makes it impossible for any but the largest ships to anchor anywhere in the protected bay.



Santorini/Thera -Caldera(volcanic crater)



Lava from the eruption cooled as it met the waters of the Mediterranean sea, forming the landmass we now know as Santorini. On the island, one can experience otherworldly volcanic landscapes while enjoying the beautiful sights of the island from its many hiking trails.

Samaria National Park (Gorge)



The Samaria Gorge is a National Park found on the island of Crete in Greece. As well as being considered a natural wonder, Samaria Gorge is also a World's Biosphere Reserve. The entire gorge stretches for a total of 9.9 miles (16 km) in length making it the longest gorge on the entire European continent. The gorge was formed millions of years ago by a small river running through both the White Mountains and Mt. Volakias. The widest area within the gorge is 492 feet (150 m) while the narrowest area is just 9.8 feet (3 m) wide.



Samaria National Park (Gorge)



- The gorge became a national park in 1962, particularly as a refuge for the rare kri-kri (Cretan goat), which is largely restricted to the park and an island just off the shore of Agia Marina. There are several other endemic species in the gorge and surrounding area, as well as many other species of flowers and birds.

The Vikos–Aoös National Park



- It is a national park in the region of Epirus in northwestern Greece. It is named after the two major gorges of the area and encompasses 12,600 hectares (31,135 acres) of mountainous terrain, with numerous rivers, lakes, caves, deep canyons, dense coniferous and deciduous forest.

The Vikos–Aoös National Park – Vikos Gorge

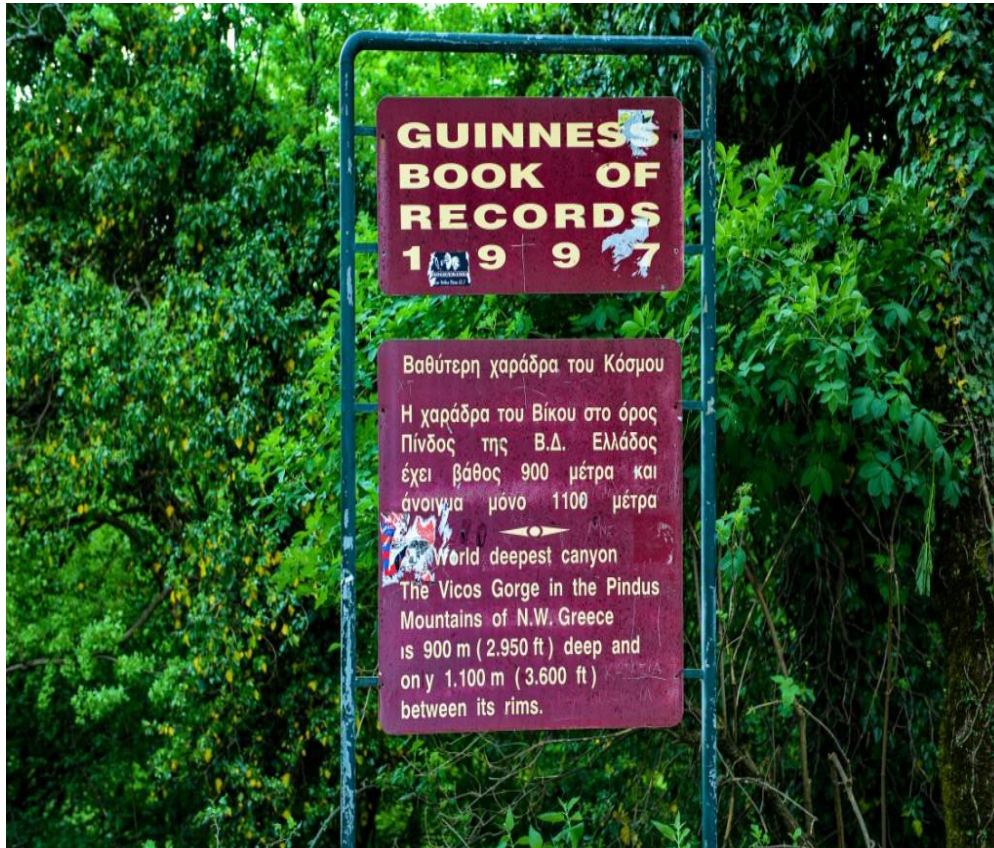


Vikos gorge is created by the intense geological upheavals and it is considered as one of the largest and most impressive limestone gorges of Europe. Its length is 12 km., its width is ranging between 200 meters and 1.5 km and it has a maximum depth of 1200m. Vikos Gorge is one of the largest and deepest in the world. It is particularly impressive, with vertical geological switch ecosystems, rich Biodiversity. It is one of the few remaining wildlife sanctuaries in Europe

The Vikos–Aoös National Park.

Vikos Gorge

At one point the gorge measures 900 m (2,953 ft) deep and 1,100 m (3,609 ft) wide from rim to rim, and as a result is listed by the Guinness Book of Records as the deepest canyon in the world in proportion to its width.



Sources

- <http://naturalwondersofeurope.com/europe-wonders/>
- <http://naturalwondersofeurope.com/greece/>
- The petrified forest of Lesvos: Lesvos Geopark
- Samaria Gorge, Seven natural wonders
- Samaria Gorge, Wikipedia
- Pindos National Park
- http://www.ert-archives.gr/Vikos_gorge
- Caldera, wikipedia
- Santorini, wikipedia