Hiking & nature around Kiato



Mountainous Sikyonia is a paradise for nature lovers. Start at **Lake Stymphalia** — a protected Natura wetland rich in birdlife.

Feneos & Doxa

The scenic **Lake Doxa** and the striking **Katavothres of Feneos** — a rare geological phenomenon of the plateau.

Forests & trails

The rare **Black Pine Forest** near Velina and dozens of trails for hiking and cycling, for every level.

Find routes & spots on the interactive map.

The High Peaks of Mount Kyllini (Ziria)

Dominating the skyline of Sikyonia is Mount Kyllini, commonly known as Ziria. As the second-highest mountain in the Peloponnese, it serves as a cornerstone for high-altitude trekking in the region. The mountain is split into Small Ziria and Big Ziria by the Flampouritsa Valley, a lush green canyon that remains one of the most significant ecological corridors in Corinthia. Hiking here offers a transition from the Mediterranean scrub of the foothills to the alpine meadows and snow-capped peaks of the interior.

The trails on Mount Kyllini are diverse, catering to both casual walkers and seasoned mountaineers. In the higher elevations, the landscape is characterized by limestone crags and deep ravines where eagles and vultures are often spotted circling the thermals. During the spring months, the melting snow feeds seasonal streams, and the alpine plateaus erupt in a carpet of rare wildflowers, including endemic crocuses and wild orchids. This is the mythical birthplace of the god Hermes, and as you walk the ancient goat paths, it is easy to imagine why the ancients saw these peaks as the dwelling places of the divine.

The Deep Green of Flampouritsa Valley

For those seeking a more sheltered hike, the Flampouritsa Valley provides a cool refuge even in the height of summer. The valley floor is dense with fir trees and ancient planes, following the course of the Sythas River.

The microclimate here is distinct from the coastal plains of Kiato, offering a damp, mossy environment that feels worlds away from the sea. Hikers can follow the well-marked paths that weave through the forest, occasionally opening up into clearings that provide framed views of the surrounding summits. The valley is also a haven for local wildlife, including wild boars, foxes, and a vast array of woodland birds.

The Mythological Landscapes of Lake Stymphalia

While Lake Stymphalia is famous for the labors of Hercules, today its shores offer a peaceful setting for nature photography and leisurely walking. The lake is a closed karst basin, meaning its water levels fluctuate significantly with the seasons, creating a dynamic environment of reeds, marshes, and open water. A network of paths circles the lake, allowing visitors to explore the ruins of the Cistercian Zaraka Abbey and the ancient city of Stymphalos while keeping a close eye on the water.

The reed beds of Stymphalia are a critical stopover for migratory birds. Birdwatchers can expect to see herons, harriers, and the rare glossy ibis during the migration seasons. The Environment Museum of Stymphalia, perched on the hillside, serves as an excellent starting point, offering context on how the human and natural history of the basin have intertwined over millennia. Walking here is as much about the silence and the rustle of the wind in the reeds as it is about the physical exertion.

Feneos: The Alpine Heart of Sikyonia

The plateau of Feneos is often described by locals as the "Corinthian Switzerland," and for good reason. Surrounded by the towering masses of Ziria, Chelmos, and Olgyrtos, the basin feels like a hidden world. The center of this landscape is Lake Doxa, an artificial lake that has harmonized perfectly with its surroundings. A flat, easy trail circles the entire perimeter of the lake, making it a favorite for families and those looking for a gentle stroll amidst pine and fir trees.

Ascending to the Monastery of St. George

Rising above Lake Doxa is the historic Monastery of St. George. The hike from the lakeshore up to the monastery is short but steep, rewarding walkers with one of the most iconic views in the Peloponnese. From the monastery’s wooden balcony, the turquoise waters of the lake are framed by the dark green of the surrounding forests. Continuing past the monastery, more challenging trails lead upward toward the mountain passes that once served as the primary trade routes between Corinthia and Arcadia.

The Feneos basin is also home to the famous "Katavothres"—massive natural sinkholes at the foot of the mountains. These geological wonders are responsible for draining the plateau, and the trails leading to them offer a fascinating look at the power of water over limestone. The scale of these caverns is a testament to the complex underground drainage systems that define the geography of northern Peloponnese.

Lower Sikyonia: Olive Groves and Ancient Trails

Closer to the coast and the administrative center of Kiato, the hiking experience shifts from alpine forests to the classic Mediterranean landscape of Sikyonia. The rolling hills behind the modern town are covered in centuries-old olive groves and vineyards that produce the region's famed grapes. Walking through these agricultural lands offers a glimpse into the daily life of the Corinthian countryside.

One of the most evocative walks in this area is the ascent to the site of Ancient Sicyon. As you climb the gentle slopes toward the ancient theater and stadium, the views of the Gulf of Corinth begin to expand. The paths here are lined with wild thyme, rosemary, and sage, filling the air with a distinct Mediterranean aroma. These routes are best explored in the late afternoon when the sun sets behind the mountains of Roumeli across the water, casting a golden light over the silver-green olive leaves.

The Asopos River Basin

The Asopos River carves a path through the Sikyonia landscape, creating a fertile valley that has been cultivated since antiquity. Following the riverbanks provides a shaded hiking experience, with the sound of running water accompanying the journey. In some sections, the river has cut deep into the soft rock, forming small canyons and interesting geological formations. This area is particularly beautiful in the autumn when the deciduous trees along the river turn vibrant shades of orange and yellow, contrasting with the evergreen pines of the higher slopes.

Seasonal Tips for Hikers in Sikyonia

The diversity of the Sikyonia landscape means that there is a trail for every season, provided you are prepared for the changing conditions:

- **Spring:** Ideally suited for the Stymphalia and Feneos plateaus. This is the peak time for wildflowers and birdwatching, as the wetlands are full and the meadows are in bloom.
- **Summer:** Focus on the high-altitude forests of Velina and the Flampouritsa Valley. The elevation provides a significant drop in temperature compared to the coastal heat of Kiato.
- **Autumn:** The best time for walking through the vineyards and olive groves of the lowlands. The harvest season brings a unique energy to the villages of Sikyonia.
- **Winter:** While the high peaks of Ziria require snowshoes or crampons, the coastal trails and the lower hills around Ancient Sicyon remain accessible and offer crisp, clear views of the sea.

Whether you are seeking the challenge of a mountain summit or the tranquility of a lakeside path, the Municipality of Sikyonia offers a remarkably varied natural canvas. The proximity of the mountains to the sea creates a landscape of constant change, ensuring that every hike reveals a new facet of this historic Greek heartland.

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Enjoy Kiato and Sikyonia!