Klimenti: the forest camp and the Environmental Education Centre



In the heart of mountainous Corinthia, where the lush slopes of Mikri Zireia meet the crystal-clear sky, lies a place where time seems to have stood still, offering an authentic experience of connection with nature. Above the picturesque village of Klimenti, a dense forest of black pines, plane trees, and firs embraces two distinct sites that for many visitors mark their first and most defining introduction to the mountain: the historic Klimenti Camps and the pioneering Environmental Education Center.

The area is an ideal destination for those seeking the tranquility of the forest, as well as for those wishing to gain a deeper understanding of the ecosystem of the mountainous Peloponnese. The journey from the coastal front of Kiato to the cool peaks of Sikyonia is a route that transforms the landscape, offering changing vistas that fascinate every traveler.

The Klimenti Camps: A History of Giving and Nature

The Klimenti Camps are not merely a place of hospitality, but an institution deeply rooted in local history. Built in the 1950s, during a time when the need for social care and bringing youth into contact with the healthy mountain environment was pressing, their creation was largely due to the tireless efforts and vision of Konstantinos Choremis, a distinguished physician and academic originally from Klimenti, who sought to offer children from his region and across Greece a space for recreation and health.

The facilities are laid out with respect for the natural terrain, spanning almost the entire slope. The complex includes stone and wooden dormitories that blend harmoniously into the environment, fully equipped kitchens, an infirmary for camper safety, and a spacious restaurant. Sports and recreational areas allow children and adults to enjoy outdoor activities, strengthening the sense of community and teamwork under the shade of the trees.

The most iconic spot of the camps is the large plateau in front of the main restaurant. From there, the visitor's eye travels freely over the treetops, reaching as far as the fertile plain of Pellene. It is the place where mountain majesty meets the tranquility of the plain, serving as the starting point for many of the trails that penetrate deeper into the pristine forest, offering unique opportunities for hiking and exploration.

Sikyonia Environmental Education Center: Knowledge for the Future

In close proximity to the camp site and at an altitude reaching 980 meters operates the Sikyonia Environmental Education Center. This facility plays a key role in raising awareness among younger generations about the critical issues of ecology and sustainability. The location of the Center is no coincidence, as the ecosystem of Mikri Zireia is a living natural laboratory.

The Center implements specialized educational programs aimed at schools of all levels, as well as organized adult groups. Through experiential activities, participants have the opportunity to discover the region's flora and fauna up close, study forest ecosystems, and understand the importance of protecting natural resources. Education here steps beyond the narrow confines of the classroom and moves out into the field, where observation and experience become the best learning tools.

The Center's activities include forest tours, identification of endemic plants, and biodiversity studies. The goal is to cultivate a new environmental consciousness that will empower visitors to become active guardians of our natural heritage. Operating at this altitude also allows for the study of the mountain's unique climatic conditions and how they influence life throughout the broader Corinthia region.

Forest Activities and Hiking Trails

The forest surrounding the camps and the Environmental Education Center is a true paradise for outdoor enthusiasts. The trails starting from the area are manageable and well-marked, making them ideal even for beginner hikers or families with young children. Walking beneath the black pines offers a unique sense of serenity, while the scent of pine resin and damp earth rejuvenates the senses.

During the hike, visitors can observe rich vegetation that includes, besides pine trees, large plane trees near spots with running water, as well as a variety of wildflowers and herbs thriving on the slopes of Mikri Zireia. The area is also a passage for many bird species, making birdwatching an engaging activity for nature lovers.

For those seeking something more relaxing, spending time in the camps' communal areas offers the chance for picnics and leisure in an environment where the temperature remains pleasant even during the warmest summer months. The view through the forest clearings out to the Corinthian Gulf is a breathtaking sight, especially in the late afternoon as the sunlight softens.

When to Visit the Area

Every season of the year brings a different beauty to Klimenti and its camps. Summer is undoubtedly the most popular period, as the altitude provides a welcome breath of cool air away from the heat of urban centers and coastal beaches. This is the time when the camps bustle with life and the forest echoes with the voices of children.

In autumn, the color palette transforms, with the plane trees taking on golden and copper hues, creating a scenery of exceptional aesthetic beauty for photography enthusiasts. Spring is equally magical, as nature awakens and wildflowers blanket the slopes, while winter often clothes the region in white, offering scenes of alpine beauty—though access can be more demanding due to snow.

Practical Information and Access

Access to Klimenti and the camp sites is relatively easy and quick. From the town of Kiato, the drive takes only a short time, following an uphill yet well-maintained road that winds through charming villages and vineyards. The gradual climb allows visitors to acclimate and enjoy the transition in vegetation from olive trees and citrus groves to the dense forests of the mountain zone.

It is important to note that both the camps and the Environmental Education Center operate based on specific schedules and programs. For this reason, prospective visitors are advised to contact the managing

entities prior to their visit to inquire about availability, guided tour options, or participation in an educational program.

Finally, don't miss the chance to explore the village itself, which holds its own charms. For more details on the settlement's history, architecture, and sights, you can refer to our article “Klimenti: The Hidden Gem of the Municipality of Sikyonia”. A visit to the camps and the Environmental Education Center combines perfectly with a stroll through the village alleys and a stop at the local taverns to sample traditional flavors of mountainous Corinthia.

- **Access:** Road connection from Kiato with good signage.
- **Preparation:** Be sure to bring a light jacket, as the temperature at an altitude of 980 meters is always lower than along the coast.
- **Contact:** Prior arrangement is required for entry into the organized facilities.

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