

## The Region of Thessaly

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### History

Thessaly, with its four Administrative Units (Larissa, Magnesia, Trikala and Karditsa), lies in Central Greece and is one of the country's largest regions in size and population. Thessaly has some of the biggest mountains in the country, Olympus, Kissavos and Pelion, and several smaller ones all over its region. There is a quite long river, the third longest one in Greece, Pinios River crossing the Tempi Valley. Thessaly's coastline has a lot of beautiful beaches and landscapes and it is very attractive to tourists. Volos is the only big harbour in Thessaly and to the east there are Northern Sporades islands, namely Skiathos, Skopelos, Alonnisos and other smaller islands. The climate is continental.

In 1910 a big agricultural reform started in Thessaly (known as "Kileler Riot") and as a result of that, agriculture in Thessaly had a great development in all fields. The German-Italian occupation caused severe problems and regression during the 2nd World War and the civil war that followed also had negative effects on the development of the region.

After 1950 there have been both domestic migration and emigration in Greece, mountain villages were deserted and their inhabitants moved and made the modern urban centres, Larissa and Volos.

Nowadays, in all its four big cities of Thessaly there are quite big industrial zones, active trade, big agricultural, animal and milk production and a continuously growing touristic activity. Pelion, the Northern Sporades islands, Meteora, Tempi, Pertouli and Lake Plastira are really worth visiting.

# The four different cities of the University of Thessaly

## ● LARISSA

Larissa has always been the capital of the Thessalian Plain. It is a dynamic and vibrant city with a rapid development, following the modern path of technology while preserving its historical identity. According to ancient mythology, it was named after the nymph Larissa, who drowned in the waters of Pinios River. On the river's banks there is the "Alcazar Park", a green oasis for the city's residents and visitors. On the citadel hill, known as the Fort (Frourio) there is an ancient Acropolis and the towering Metropolitan church of Saint Achillios. The first Ancient Theater of Larissa was built on the slope of this hill and it is the second largest ancient theatre in Greece after that of Ancient Epidaurus.

You can also visit in Larissa the Archaeological Museum, the Municipal Art Gallery, the Ethnographical and Historical Museum, the Hippocrates Museum and the Laografic Museum.

The journey in Larissa begins in its center and continues in Tempi, in Pinios Delta and in Mount Olympus.

For more information: <http://www.tourismLARISSA.gr>

## ● VOLOS

"The Land of the Argonauts and the Centaurs" Volos, situated between the Pagasitikos Golf and the Pelion Mountain, is the capital of Magnesia and one of the largest and most modern cities of Greece. The privileged location of Volos and its port attracts important investment ensuring the prosperity of the region.

The significant Neolithic settlements of Dimini and Sesklo are close to the city of Volos. They appear to be the first traces of permanent human settlement in the wider region.

The journey into Magnesia begins in Volos but also continues in Pelion Mountain with 24 picturesque and traditional villages easily accessed and relatively in a small distance from the city of Volos and in Sporades Islands.

For more information: <http://www.magnesia-tourism.gr>

## ● KARDITSA

With a population close to 40.000, Karditsa is the fourth largest city of Thessaly. Its foundation is placed in the late Byzantine period as its name is not Turkish and therefore it existed before the Turkish invasion in West Thessaly in 1393.

Since the early 20th century the modernization of the city has been rather intense. Today Karditsa is a modern bustling city with gentle inhabitants, good city planning, beautiful buildings, many shops, sufficient sports facilities and squares. In the recent years the need to deal with the traffic jam in the center of the city made the Municipal Authorities to create a 4 Km urban and 10 km peri-urban bicycle track. The journey in Karditsa begins in its center and continues in Lake Plastira, in Neraida, Neohori and Mouzaki, in the Argitheia Villages and in other worth visiting places all around the Karditsa Prefecture, where everybody can enjoy nature in many different landscapes.

For more information: <http://www.Karditsa.gr>

## ● TRIKALA

The place where Trikala city is built was an important commercial center but also a pole of attraction for invaders till 1204, mainly due to the crossing of two great commercial routes, both from Epirus and Macedonia. The city in general has many beautiful squares which serve as resting places and meeting points for the inhabitants.

The journey in Trikala begins in its center and continues in Pili, the Aspopotamos villages, in Kalambaka, and of course in Meteora, the famous Monastic Community on the stone giants composing one of the most miraculous and imposing geological phenomena all over the world.

For more information: <http://www.trikala.gr>