



The Thrace Region (Greece)

The area of southwestern Thrace has been inhabited since Neolithic times. Settlements and objects have been spotted in the plains of Xanthi dating back to 4500 B.C. The general development of the area during the years of the Ottoman occupation is related to the cultivation of tobacco after the 17th century. In the 18th century, Genisea and Xanthi became known worldwide due to the growing of tobacco. The northern city of Xanthi is one of the most underrated places in Greece. This beautiful destination has the biggest and best-preserved Old Cities in the country, and has also been influenced by many different cultures in its past, evident in its architecture, lifestyle, and diversity.



Cultural heritage and environmental resources

The region has significant natural attractions, landscapes of high aesthetic value and several regional cultural heritage items, which include also a number of "immaterial" elements such as traditions, rites, practices and customs, which help to shape the cultural identity of a certain region or a certain community. In particular : the Thracian Folklore Celebrations-Xanthi Carnival, the largest and most famous carnival in Northern Greece ; the Xanthi Old town Festival, during which the streets of the old town overwhelmed with music, food, drinks and thousand of visitors ; the Youth Festival and the International Music festival « Xanthi City of Dreams » .



Economic activities and regional strategies

The presence of tourism is quite intense in the region. Strategic policies within complex operating environments where organizations try to adapt to an inter-dependent production process in a dynamic mix of competition and cooperation. Over the past few years more and more has been increased the interest and expanded the circle of tourists of cultural tourism, by changing consumer culture and consciousness for the importance of cultural heritage in tourist destinations. The region hosts an international conference on Fish Tourism in Abdera every year to promote eco-friendly methods of commercial fishing and supports its local fishermen. This area of Greece combines many types of outdoor activities which includes hiking, caving, kayaking, birdwatching, horseback riding and agrotourism among others. The Nestos river and Nestos delta are the gods' gifts to outdoor activities from rafting to birdwatching. Lake Vistonida and Xanthi's lush forests are equally enchanting.



Tourist attractions

The region has significant natural attractions, landscapes of high aesthetic value. In the area of Xanthi Cultural tourism is developing as one of the most successful industries in different. Basis for its approval is primarily the potential of cultural heritage, which is seen as a strategic source of general socio-economic development of the region. Xanthi preserves a different types of tourists qualities influencing the attractiveness of tourist destinations are their cultural and social characteristics. Xanthi also boasts a connection to the Sea. The towns that are on the coastline for swimming activities are Avdera, Erasmio, Mirodato, Magana, Madra, Porto Lagos, Potamia and Nea Kesani. The region is well known for its monasteries and churches. Many visitors make the pilgrimage to many sacred place to pay homage to the Virgin Mary. There are many museums to discover in this region too, such as the Folk Museum in the Old Town of Xanti.



Local products linked to the Mediterranean Diet

Well-known and well-preferred within as well as beyond Greek borders, the local cuisine is about straightforward flavours and thanks to the fine quality of raw materials, local gastronomy offers a variety of delectable traditional dishes, complementing the region's special cultural identity. Excellent Mediterranean local products are produced in the region, such as wine, edible grapes, grape must; extra olive oil, edible olives and olive oil products; jams and traditional fruit sweets; cereal products (pasta etc.).



Cultural routes and itineraries

Interesting touristic routes have been planned by Ministry of Tourism, European Projects and several actions from Region of East Macedonia & Thrace, municipalities, and private companies, such as : the European Cultural Route Project « The labours of Hercules » (which aims to create a tourist - historic-cultural path with reference to the life, travels and the labours of the most important hero of the Greek mythology, Hercules) ; the European Cultural Route Project « The Tobacco Road » (the proposal was conducted in order to map the tourist route which is associated with "tobacco road" in Europe and the Mediterranean region); different Religious Routes.