Skopos - Tourkolivado

### Overview

Very beautifull section following the old transhuman route to the high pastures of Voras. It is a demanding hike requiring an overnight on the mountain. The hike was recently complicated by the construction of the hydroelectric dam above Skopos that adds an additional 5km to the route.

### Description

Skopos was once a small commercial town (with estimated 1500 inhabitants) serving the Vlachi and Sarakatsani caravans bringing their livestock up to the high pastures of Kaimaktsalan (Voras) mountain for the summer. Nowadays only the ruins of a several huts on the mountain witness this glorious past.

From Skopos square continue on the main road that soon becomes a wide dirt road moving on the left bank of Geropotamos river. Cross the river passing by Agios Nikolaos church (nice camping location with water) and continue on the road soon ascending gently through arid vegetation. After about 5km you come at the base of the dam and the road becomes paved making a large switchback to reach the top of the dam. Then it follows the contour of the artificial lake and eventually becomes dirt road again climbing gently past the old Agios Nikolaos chapel and the abandoned military outpost at Papadia.

Continue on the road through oak forests for about 2km coming to a junction. Take the left branch that ascends with a few switchbacks to a hut by a distinctive rock overhang. Now leave the road and descent towards the ravine ahead with an eastern direction. Soon a small path becomes visible that becomes clear as soon as as you go into the forest. This will bring you at the bottom of the ravine. Cross the stream and continue on its opposite bank. Emerging out of the forest the path becomes very faint. Head for a set of ruined huts on the ridge ahead. After that, turn steeply left along the ridge with the path becoming soon clear. Eventually join the road, the same one that you left at the junction below. Take a shortcut path just before each right turn of the road and then follow it as it traverses grassy slopes to an abandoned sheepfold and water trough. The road continues to another sheepfold and shepherds huts but ignore it to take the old footpath along the fence of the pen.

This path is nowadays in disuse and thus covered in places with tall grass (a GPS would be essential to follow it). Traverse gently grassy slopes and pass by several springs coming to the ruins of a shepherd's hut with a couple of lonely trees. Now climb steeply towards the ridge above you with an old stone-build pen where the path becomes amazingly very clear. Descent gently towards the beautiful and secluded Geles valley with its gurgling stream. After encircling this valley the path becomes faint again, heading for a patch of pines inside a gully. A little care is needed to find the path buried under tall fern, that crosses the stream and continues to the other side to gain a broad ridge where it joins a small track coming from the huts mentioned before.

Continue on this track towards a saddle with beautiful views and descent to its other side. At a junction turn right on a wide footpath trodden by herds of cows to join a stream. It is possible to make a shortcut here by going downstream on cow trails. Alternatively crossing to the opposite side take a small path diagonally to the right (the wide path ahead leads to a large sheepfold) through pine forest, across a meadow and descent to an old military outpost (one secondary building could be used as a shelter). Continue now on a track, now reclaimed by the forest to descent to the scenic valley of Floros stream. Cross the stream and ascend through pine forest on a rough track to join the paved road coming from Agios Athanasios.

Follow the road uphill along the beautiful valley finishing at the distinctive saddle and cow pen at Tourkolivado.

### Amenities

There is no accommodation in Skopos. Camp outside the village in the yard of Agios Nikolaos chapel. Tourkolivado is not a good campsite. You have to continue to Damaskinies saddle where there is water and the forest to protect you from the wind. There are also two Sarakatsani huts there that you could possible use as a shelter.

### Signposting

There is not signposting except from a few signs inside Skopos village. There are also some route finding difficulties and thus a GPS is strongly recommended.

### Transportation

Skopos may accessed by Taxi from Florina. Tourkolivado is on the paved road to Kaimaktsalan ski center and thus hitch-hiking is possible although difficult during summer months.

### Notes

The route contains high altitude sections that maybe under snow from late October to early May.

### Maps

Anavasi map "Prespa - Vitsi - Voras" (1:50000)