

# Medieval Castle of Skiathos

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In the mid-14th century, due to relentless pirate raids, the inhabitants of Skiathos were forced to relocate their city to Kastro, a peninsula in the northern part of the island that naturally functioned as a fortress. They fortified its defenses with tall, robust walls equipped with embrasures and cannons aimed inland to enhance its defenses.

Access between the fortress and the surrounding land was facilitated by a wooden drawbridge that connected the fortress gate to the adjacent hill. In emergencies, the bridge was drawn back into Kastro, preventing enemy entry. Above the outer gate was a terrace fitted with a "zematistra"—a large skillet used for pouring hot water on intruders.

From its construction until 1453, Kastro remained under Byzantine rule. It then fell under Venetian control until 1538, after which it was ruled by the Turks until 1821, except for a brief return to Venetian rule around 1660. During this time, life was extremely harsh for the residents. In addition to frequent pirate attacks and threats from potential invaders, they also faced severe overcrowding inside the fortress walls.

The houses within Kastro were small and packed closely together. Despite this tight space, the settlement contained over twenty churches, as well as a mosque (without a minaret) from the Turkish occupation, and essential water tanks. The cemetery was located outside the city.

After Kastro was abandoned in 1830, following the establishment of the independent Greek state, it was left to decay. Today, only two churches—Gennisi tou Christou (Christ's Birth) and Agios Nikolaos—remain intact, along with the partially ruined church of Panagia Preklas. Some of the original wall and the gate, the terrace with the "zematistra," remnants of the mosque, and parts of the Turkish headquarters are still visible. Two water tanks and the cannon of Anagia also survive.

Kastro is considered the most significant historical site on Skiathos, blending imposing, untamed natural beauty with a rich history. Together, the landscape and ruins evoke a wistful sense of the past.

**Overview**

Purpose: Excursion	Type: Castle	Country: Greece
City: Skiathos	Zip code: 370 02	

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**Greek Map**