



The municipality boasts old mountain trails suitable for trekking exploration and rare wetlands with a variety of fauna and flora species. The River Filiouris empties into the beach of the village of Ismaros making up a wetland habitat of exquisite beauty attracting bird watchers and nature lovers with its many tiny lakes and rich bird fauna including flamingos. Just before the coastal settlement of Prophitis Elias, another biotope offers shelter to many heron species and other birds. The settlement of Platanitis boasts dense vegetation especially along the mountain stream that flows into the sea.



The traditional village of Maronia features a splendid square shaded by age - long plane trees, a spring with crystal water flowing from the very heart of Mount Ismaros, churches dating back to the 18th century, tiny chapels and wonderfully restored mansions with balconies offering breathtaking views. The local cultural association plays an active part in preserving local traditions such as the “Babo” custom celebrated on 8 January each year. The coastal zone of the municipality is lined with café bars, children playgrounds and taverns serving the famous Maronite wine and traditional dishes prepared with local meat, fresh seafood and season vegetables.



MARONIA

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Maronia is a municipality in the Rhodope Prefecture stretching over an area of almost 75.000 acres between the massif of Mt Ismaros and the Thracian Sea. The seat of the municipality is in Xylagani with a communal clinic, police station, banks, post office, school, shops, a local band and a Folkore Museum with collections of traditional embroidery, local costumes, agricultural tools and other objects of interest.



According to a legend, Ancient Maronia was founded by Maron, a son of Dionysus. Some scholars identify it with Homer's Ismaros. In Odyssey, a grateful, Maron offers to presents Odysseus some of wine, gold and silver for having been saved after the plundering of the city. In antiquity, Maronia was famous for its wine which is believed by many to have the fragrance of nectar.



Back in history at least 3.000 years, Maronia has important archaeological sites and beautiful natural monuments, including an ancient theatre, the walls and the acropolis of Ancient Ismaros, the monumental Roman Gate, the quarries and the impressive Maronia Cave (or cave of Cyclop Polyphemus, according to a local legend).