

Gryka e Këlcyrës – Limar - Mbrezhan

Trail distance: 14.9 kilometers

Elevation min: 150 meters, max: 1,034 meters

Cumulative height uphill: 996 meters, downhill: 984 meters

Difficulty level: Moderate

Time: 8 hours

Markings: white/red/white?

This is a relatively long but very beautiful hike that offers amazing views initially towards the gorge of Gryka e Këlcyrës and then towards the canyon of Zagoria and Mount Çajupi. The trail travels also into the picturesque mountain village of Limar that is a good place either to rest awhile or overnight. From Limar the trail leads towards village of Mbrezhan that is located near Kelcyrë town.

There are regular mini busses from Përmet to Këlcyrë but one has to negotiate with the driver to get to the restaurants of Gryka e Këlcyrës and for a taxi to pick you up at the bridge of Mbrezhan.

Water could be found in trailhead, Limar and Near Mbrezhan.

The hike starts in front of Restaurant River in Kelcyre. The path follows initially steeply southwest through the woods on gravel mule path. Take right at the fork (WP 2) after approx. 150 meters where a little trail goes up left that might be used by people who cut wood. Even though there are some forks, it is difficult to miss the main trail since it's the biggest and the most visible one. Locals use this trail very regularly, especially in winter time when the road to Kelcyrë (nearest town) is blocked by snow.

The trail follows uphill and as much height it gains less woods are and the view to Kelcyra gorge opens especially when having reached a stone on the right of the trail which is a good point to stop a while and enjoy the breathtaking views of the gorge (WP 3). After the stone the trail becomes rockier and it turns right at the next crossing, approx. 150 m after the stone. Few minutes after the trail reaches a gravelly exposed part from where you can see the water factory and the church below the path. Having passed the gravel, approx. 100 meters further on, the trail forks and one should keep right for a gentler ascent (WP 4).

The trail follows uphill gaining approx. 130 meters more height for arriving at the pass of Shtegu i Pelës (The mare path) at the WP 5. Having reached the pass of Shgegu i Pelës, the trail gets wider and easier. Very close to the pass one can see that the trail is built by stonewalls on the exposed cliffs. Approx. 100 meters further the trail takes left at the junction where a path on the right goes down into Zagoria River. The hike follows in a good mule path with little up and downs, passes some shepherds' huts (WP 6) and after approx. 3 kilometers it starts ascending east (WP 7) in a beautiful gorge with steep cliffs and some waterfalls. In the difficult parts the trail is secured by stony walls and the mules can easily pass. After some minutes the trail leads

us at the village of Limar an inviting place to rest awhile.

Take north on the main road for leaving the village and turn off right for taking a mule path as soon as you pass the last house of Limar (WP 8). The trail ascends northeast following a crest that is lined by streams. After few hundred meters the trail passes next to the water deposit of the village. Having passed the deposit, the trail follows very visible and crosses a stream after awhile and then it crosses the dirt road (WP 9) for heading northeast towards the pass which is already visible. At the highest point of the pass there are some ruins of a church (WP 10) and from here the path follows right on a very visible path which descends very gently. After approx. 1 kilometer the view opens towards Kelcyra (WP 11). Just below could be seen the gravel road which connects the village of Mbrezhan with Limar.

The descent starts to become steeper northeast and our trail crosses the gravel road (WP 12) after approx. 1 kilometer for following a mules' shortcut that travels next to the gravel road (main road) and meets it again after awhile. Now the walk follows on the gravel road for a while (approx. 1 km) and turns off left at the junction where houses starts. At the junction is also a public water fountain (WP 13). From the water fountain the trail follows directly right on a village road lined by wooden and rock fences. After awhile this road meets again the gravel road close to radio towers and our trail leaves the gravel road (WP 14) for following a path on the right leaving the radio towers in our left. This trail leads at the beautiful pedestrian bridge on Vjosa River that is very close to the main road (WP 15).

UTM Waypoints

- 1 34 T 428742 4460974, trailhead, 150 m
- 2 34 T 428664 4460886, junction, 201 m
- 3 34 T 428456 4460622, viewpoint, 268 m
- 4 34 T 428218 4460424, fork, 345 m
- 5 34 T 427766 4460621, pass, 470 m
- 6 34 T 427879 4459840, shepherds huts, 559 m
- 7 34 T 428956 4457284, start ascending, 611 m
- 8 34 T 429741 4457165, Limar, 730 m
- 9 34 T 429770 4457708, junction, 792 m
- 10 34 T 430271 4458601, pass, 950 m
- 11 34 T 430369 4459095, viewpoint, 1033
- 12 34 T 430927 4459721, cross gravel road, 1002 m
- 13 34 T 431765 4460914, junction, 608 m
- 14 34 T 431719 4461518, junction, 359 m
- 15 34 T 432490 4462046, bridge, 195 m

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