

Trip To Meteora

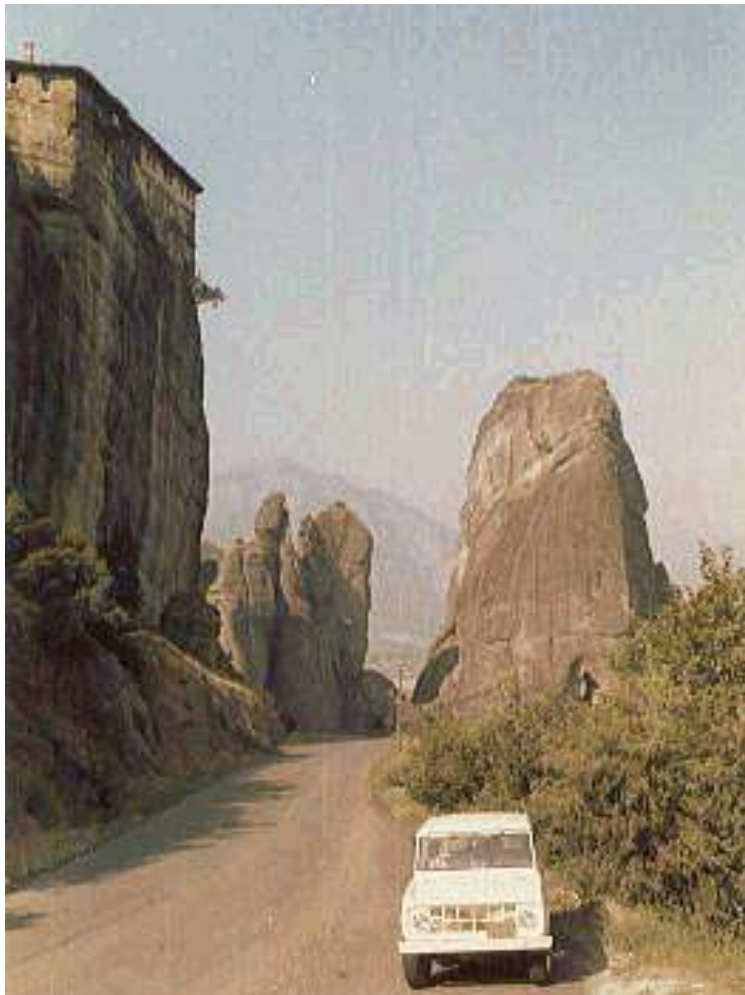


The Rousanou Convent at Meteora

While serving with Detachment-1, 6916th Security Squadron in Athens, Greece from 1970 to 1975, my wife Shelia, son Charlie, daughter Andrea and I took a drive north to Meteora.

From Wikipedia: The Meteora (/ˌmɛtɪˈɔːrə/; [1] Greek: Μετέωρα, pronounced [meˈteora]) is a rock formation in central Greece hosting one of the largest and most precipitously built complexes of Eastern Orthodox monasteries, second in importance only to Mount Athos.[2] The six (of an original twenty four) monasteries are built on immense natural pillars and hill-like rounded boulders that dominate the local area. It is located near the town of Kalabaka at the northwestern edge of the Plain of Thessaly near the Pineios river and Pindus Mountains.

We drove first to Thessaloniki, the second largest city in Greece and the capital of Macedonia. Shelia spotted an interesting glass factory near Tessaloniki and we stopped to investigate. It was an extensive and fascinating place with oodles of ceramics, blown glass and other glass-art pieces. While we were browsing around, there was suddenly a loud clamor behind the building. I ran outside to see what was going on and was stunned to see daughter Andrea, who was about 3.5 years old, running with a chicken that she had grabbed by the neck. The other chickens were squawking and flying around. She seemed really proud that she had caught the bird and wanted to keep it. Naturally, I had her let the chicken go and apologized to the proprietor who had also come out to see what the ruckus was.



Our 1968 Ford Bronco at Meteora

From Thessaloniki, we drove the back roads southwest to Meteora, arriving mid afternoon. We made the mistake of not getting something to eat before leaving Thessaloniki and were starved, only to discover that every place to eat was closed for “afternoon siesta.” Looking around the towns of Kalabaka and Kastraki, I saw someone through the window of a taverna who seemed to be working. I knocked on the door and the man came to the door. I told him we were all hungry and he said they were closed, that I should come back after 7:00pm. I pleaded with him for anything that he might be able to give us to tide us over and promised that the whole family would definitely come back later for a full meal. He sympathized with our plight and fixed us a big platter of fresh tomatoes, cucumbers and feta cheese with olive oil drizzled on top and a loaf of crusty bread. That was very close to the most delicious food I have eaten in my life. We did indeed come back later and enjoyed a full meal with a carafe of local red wine.

We spent the entire next day exploring many of the monasteries of Meteora, a most amazing place.

On the way back home to Athens, we stopped for lunch (well before siesta time) at a roadside taverna and had stuffed tomatoes and stuffed grape leaves (δολμάδες). The four of us stuffed ourselves, including bread, water, tea and dessert. As I recall, the bill was less than six American dollars.

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