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The Ionian Islands

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THE IONIAN ISLANDS

GREEK NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATION

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GREECE

Ionian Islands



The Ionian Islands have a temperate climate, seawaters as deep as they are refreshing, verdant mountains, a rich cultural heritage and a carefree spirit; the ideal combination for your holidays during which you will enjoy a well-developed tourism infrastructure, hotels, restaurants, water sports centres, cultural events and numerous sights, historic monuments, and museums.

Scattered along the mainland's western coastline, the Ionian Islands are a cluster of 12 large and small islands covering an area of 2,200 sq. km. There are six large ones: Zakynthos (Zante), Ithaki (Ithaca), Kerkyra (Corfu), Kefalonia (Cephalonia), Lefkada (Leucas), and Paxoi. The small ones are Antipaxoi, Ereikoussa, Mathraki, Othonoi, Meganisi, Kalamos, Kastos and Strofades isle group south of Zante. Together with Kythira and Antikythira (both at a distance from the rest, opposite southern Peloponnese and Lakonia's coastline) they form *Eptanesa* (meaning *Seven Islands*).

Being part of the Greek mainland once, the Ionian Islands were torn away when part of the terrain sank due to the seismic activity along the Ionian Sea's coastline fault; that accounts for the area's rugged shores, beautiful beaches and imposing mountains that used to be part of the Pindos Mountain Range across the Greek mainland. It also accounts for the sea depth

in the area, reaching 4,406 m., registered as the greatest in the Mediterranean. Their mild, temperate climate makes them the ideal choice for vacation or permanent stay. In the wintertime, the mainland's mountains buffer the bitter northern winds blowing to the direction of the islands while the hot summer weather is tempered by the mild northwestern *meltemia* winds and the sea breeze. The area's air currents have turned many of the Ionian Islands' beaches into worldwide known destinations for windsurfing. The Ionian Islands have been inhabited since the Paleolithic times. Since then, numerous invaders and cultural influences have left their stamp on the islands. In 1204 the Franks seized Constantinople and the Ionian Islands, part of the Byzantine Empire until then, were ceded to the Venetians. Venetian rule led to the formation of local nobility, whose register remained in effect as late as the 19th century. From the time of Frankish rule until 1864, when the islands became part of Greece, power changed hands a number of times. European presence on the islands, concurrently with Ottoman rule in the rest of Greece, led to significant intellectual activity that is manifest in the islands' architectural tradition and charming cultural traits.

Corfu (Kerkyra)



3. The impressive row of arches at Liston.

Cosmopolitan Kerkyra is probably the best known Ionian island and one of the Mediterranean's most popular destinations. It attracts hundreds of thousands of tourists annually and is an inexhaustible source of artistic inspiration. Its enormous cultural heritage, combined with its natural beauty, ideal climate, inviting beaches, and noteworthy sights make it a prestigious and attractive destination for Greek and foreign visitors alike. Area: 591 sq. km. Coastline length: 217 km. Kerkyra was named after a woman. Mythology has it that when Poseidon fell in love with Korkyra, Aesopos' daughter, he retreated with her to this island and named it after her. Faiakas, the boy born to them, established the Kingdom of the Faiakes which, according to Homer, was Odysseus' last stop before his return to Ithaca.

Kerkyra is known abroad as Corfu because of the island's two acropolises [perched on two hilltops (*corfés* in Greek)] within the city of Kerkyra. Its other ancient name was Drepanon (scurvy) due to the island's shape.

Corfu determines Greece's sea borders with neighbouring Italy and Albania. It is therefore its strategic position that has made her the bone of contention among conquerors whose presence on the island stamped its culture, tradition, and customs. Venetian, French, and British rule left behind strong elements of western culture which eventually blended with the island's Greek identity. In 1864, Corfu became part of Greece. The island's contribution to education, literature, the arts, and politics has been enormous. It is the birthplace of Ioannis Kapodistrias, modern Greece's first governor; scholars Andreas Moustoxydis and Iakovos Polyas; composer Nikolaos Mantzaros who set the Greek National Anthem to music; Spyros Samaras who set the Olympic Anthem to music; and the Theotokis Family numbering eminent politicians and writers amongst its members. In 1824, the Ionian Academy, Greece's first university was founded on the island followed by the first Greek philharmonic band in 1840. No wonder that, today, there are 20 philharmonic bands in Corfu.

City of Corfu 1

It has a population of approximately 30,000 residents, corresponding to one third of the population in Corfu Regional Unit (Corfu, Paxoi, Antipaxoi, Othonoi, Ereikoussa and Mathraki). The city is divided into the old town or 'Xopoli', between the old and new fortress, and three new suburbs: **Mantouki** to the NW; **Saroko** between Avrami and Sotiras hills; and **Garitsa** which begins at Douglka's pillar located at the south beach. The historic centre lies within the old town whose fortified walls prevented it from spreading out, and led to a singular architectural style, featuring tall multi-storey buildings and narrow cobblestone alleys (*kantounia*), where laundry is hung out to dry from buildings across either side of the alley, and small squares. It is Greece's largest preserved medieval town and one of the most beautiful in the Mediterranean; as of 2007 it has been on the list of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

City promenade

• To **Spianada** (Esplanade), the city's central

square as well as one of the country's largest and most impressive ones. It was designed for defense purposes during the 17th-18th century when the Venetians opened up "Spianata" – an area equalling approx. 1/3 of the then settlement– in the Old Fortress' foreground, so as to widen their firing range in case of an attack. This is the most popular promenade area for locals and visitors alike. It is also the place where most cultural events take place e.g. concerts, religious processions, parades as well as cricket matches (on the lawn). Opposite Spianada, there is Pentofanaro, the skateboarders' favourite hangout, the Monument for the Unification of the Ionian Islands and Greece, the Venetian cistern and the pavilion sheltering the philharmonic bands during concerts.

• To **Liston**, one of the most famous buildings in Spianada, marked by impressive rows of arches. It was built by French engineer Lesseps during the rule of the French Imperialists. It has been modelled according to the Rue Rivoli buildings in Paris. Lined with pastry shops, cafés and elegant shops, Liston is a favourite rendez-vous place for locals and visitors alike.

4. Garitsa bay at the south end of the city of Corfu.





5. Panoramic view of the city of Corfu; the old harbour area.



- To the **Palace of Saints Michael and George** (built 1819-1823 according to the Georgian architectural style). It boasts lavish decorative elements, grand entrance gates and a Doric colonnade. The palace served as the residence of the British Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Senate and of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George. Nowadays it houses the remarkable **Asian Art Museum** which numbers approximately 10,500 art objects from India, China, Korea, Pakistan, Japan, etc., donated by private collectors, and the **Municipal Gallery**, mostly exhibiting the artwork of 19th-20th century Corfiote artists.

- To the **Reading Society**, modern Greece's oldest cultural institution.

- To the **gate of San Nicolo**, opposite the Reading Society, below the main road where Faliraki cove is located as well as a beach – formerly a private one - by the name of **"Aleko's bathing place"**.

- To the **Old Fortress**, built on a peninsula opposite Spianada. Fortifications began as early as the Byzantine times and were completed by the Venetians who turned the peninsula into an islet by building the Contra Fossa moat. An impressive bridge links it to the city. Noteworthy monuments on the fortress grounds are: the **main entrance gate**; the Savorgnan, Martinengo, and Mandraki **ramparts**; the land and sea surveillance **wachtowers**; the 1840 **Agios Georgios** basilica built to resemble an ancient Doric temple; an old **catholic chapel**; the **old jailhouse**; the **British barracks** and the **British**



6. The Sts. Michael and George palace.

hospital. See also the **Lighthouse**, the **clock tower**, the **Central Municipal Library** and the **History Archives**.

- To **Campiello**, Corfu's oldest neighbourhood. You can visit Panagia i Kremasti church and the square with the Venetian well.

- To **Mouragia**, one of the city's most scenic neighbourhoods. Follow Arseniou Street (starting at the old port and ending at Sts Michael and George Palace, in the central square).

7. Palaiokastritsa,
one of Corfu's most popular tourist resorts.



On 1, Arseniou Street you will come upon **Di-onysios Solomos Museum**, the former house of the poet who wrote the "Hymn to Freedom" (Greece's National Anthem) and who lived there for almost 30 years until his death in 1857.

- To the **old Prefecture building**, at Mouragia. It is an outstanding neoclassical building designed by architect Ioannis Chronis. It has been built on the site of the house where Ioannis Kapodistrias, the first governor of Greece, was born.

- To the **Town Hall Square**, the most important square during Venetian times. It is flanked by remarkable buildings such as The Lodge of the Nobles ("Loggia dei Nobili", 1663), converted in 1720 into San Giacomo Theatre, to become today's **City Hall**, one of the city's finest buildings; the Catholic Metropolitan Church of **San Giacomo e San Cristoforo**; and the **residence of the Catholic Archbishop**, housing a Bank of Greece branch today.

- To the **New Fortress** (1576) where you can visit the old British barracks, galleries, arched passageways, bastions, gun emplacements, and see inscriptions in Latin on the walls. From that location you will enjoy a panoramic view of the sea and the historic town centre. The **Ceramics Museum** and an open air theatre are also located here.

- To the **Ionian Parliament** (near the corner of Moustoxydi and Zampeli Streets) where the union of the Ionian Islands with Greece was voted for. This neoclassical building was designed by architect Ioannis Chronis and built in 1854.

- To the noteworthy archeological **Monument of Menekrates**, at Garitsa, made of hewn stones and bearing an archaic inscription citing Menekrates as a consul from present-day Galaxidi town.

- To **Platytera Monastery**, at Mantouki, adorned by impressive murals, icons, and other valuable heritage items. It is also Kapodistrias' final resting place. There are a number of good tavernas in the area.

- To **Spilia**, an area at the old port.

- To the **Jewish Quarter**, where the city's Jewish residents have always had their stores.

- To the **Archeological Museum** (1, Vraïla Armeni Street). It houses finds from archeological



8. The monastery of Vlacherna. Beyond that, the byzantine church of Pantokratoras on Pontikonisi islet.

sites around the city; the most impressive one is the enormous Gorgo pediment from the Doric temple of Artemis.

- To **Kanoni**, one of Corfu's top touristic spots with an excellent view of Vlacherna Monastery, Pontikonisi, the Chalikiopoulos Lagoon and the airport.

- To **Pontikonisi**, Corfu's islet-landmark. According to mythology, it was a Faiakes ship that turned to stone.

- To **Mon Repos** (3 km S). A visit to this outstanding estate is a must! You will see the neoclassical mansion that had been used by the former Greek royal family as a country residence. It was originally built for Sir Frederick Adam, the British High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands and Diamantina Palatianou, his

Corfiote wife. It is a 19th-century neoclassical architectural gem and now houses the small yet interesting Archeological Museum of Palaiopolis.

- To **Palaiopolis**, the archeological site near Mon Repos which was ancient Corfu's *agora* (market place). Make a point of visiting the temple of Apollo (within Mon Repos next to the ruins of the Temple of Hera), the Roman baths, the *agora* and a late Hellenistic times edifice.

- To **Vido** (Ptychia), an isle opposite the old port, accessible by boat. Its lush vegetation includes pines and palm trees. Once a rehabilitation centre, it is now home to pheasants, partridges, hares, and wild rabbits (no hunting allowed). You will find a restaurant and a number of gorgeous beaches there.

- To **Lazaretto** (Gouvino), another islet teeming with flora opposite the old port; a national monument.

Churches

- Corfiotes are devout people. There are many churches on the island and the orthodox Easter is celebrated with the becoming splendour in the traditional manner. The city's patron saint is Agios Spyridon who, according to tradition, has delivered the locals from the plague in 1629. Do not fail to visit **Agios Spyridon** church, the Corfiotes' religious point of reference. You will

9. View of Palaiopolis archeological site.





10. The church of Panagia tis Tenedou.

see the city's tallest belfry, a marble iconostasis (*templon*), exquisite murals, religious heritage items and votive offerings. The Saint's holy relics (*skenoma*) are kept in a gilded shrine studded with precious stones. On Palm Sunday morning the holy relics are placed at the forefront of a procession going around the city, accompanied by Corfu's 20 philharmonic bands.

- **Panagia i Antivouniotissa**, at Mouragia. The "painted" wall tapestry and panels that are decorated with gilded wood carvings are particularly interesting. It houses the **Byzantine Museum**, exhibiting a significant collection of portable icons of the Cretan School of Art.
- **Panagia i Spiliotissa** (1577), located at Cor-

fu's port. This three-aisled basilica is known for the 15th-century Panagia Dimosiana icon painted on both sides.

- **Panagia ton Xenon**, built by the monk Nikodimos in the early 18th century.
- **Agios Ioannis Prodromos** (16th century), at Sternes. It is a single-aisled basilica with a wooden roof and great murals.
- **Pantokrator**, a church well known for its beautiful marble iconostasis.
- **Agios Nikolaos ton Geronton** (16th century), at Campiello; the carved iconostasis is one of the oldest in the city.
- **Panagia i Kremasti**, where you will see a marble iconostasis and remarkable icons. A

beautiful Venetian well graces its courtyard.

- There are three more Catholic churches: **San Giacomo e San Cristoforo** (at City Hall square), **Agios Fragkiskos** Monastery and **Panagia tis Tenedou** church. The **Jewish Synagogue** is situated near the New Fortress and the city's historic centre.

Events

- Festivities taking place on the three successive Sundays of the Carnival.
- The "Petegoletsa" skits, on the last Thursday of the Carnival Season.
- Easter is a special celebration in Corfu, beginning on Palm Sunday when Agios Spyridon religious procession takes place. This is repeated on Holy Saturday. That day it is customary to drop clay jugs to the ground from balconies at Liston. The island's philharmonic bands follow the processions as well as the Lord's *Epitaphios* [an embroidered cloth icon of Christ prepared for burial, lying on a low table covered in flowers] on Good Friday.
- Celebration of the island's union with Greece, on May 21st.
- The Ionian Islands Music Festival.
- "Varkarola", in August.

Fun activities

- Swimming. If you stay in the capital, go to the beaches of Anemomylos, Mon Repos and Vido.
- Sports: By the beachfront hotels you can go for water skiing, windsurfing, "ringo" riding, beach volleyball, and much more.
- You will also find waterslides, swimming pools and water fun for the young and older ones alike. The facilities include restaurants, bars and mini markets offering a full range of services.
- Casino: at the "Corfu Holiday Palace" Hotel.

Sports activities

- The Corfu Cricket Festival with the participation of UK teams.
- The annual Formula III Powerboat Racing World Championship.
- The Ropa Valley golf course is located in the centre of the island, near Ermones beach and is considered as one of the finest in Europe. It

is home to the Corfu Golf Association and has a golf academy for the young aged 8-18.

- Enjoy waterskiing, windsurfing, parasailing, "ringo" and pedalo riding, personal watercraft riding, etc at beaches with water sports facilities.
- Corfu's coastline areas are ideal for scuba diving as you can explore coves, bays, rocky sea beds, and acquaint yourself with the impressive local marine life.

11. Witness the custom of dropping clay jugs at Liston.



Useful phone numbers (+30)



- **Corfu Municipal Office:** 26613-61.324, 26613-62731
- **Police Station:** 100, 26610-38.661, 26610-20.821
- **E.O.T. (Greek National Tourism Organisation):** 26610-37.638
- **Ionian Islands Regional Tourism Bureau:** 26610-37.520, 26610-37.638-40
- **Tourist Police Station:** 26610-29.168
- **Traffic Police Station:** 26610-29.167
- **Port authority: Domestic timetables:** 26610-32.655, 26610-39.513, **International timetables:** 26610-30.481
- **Marina (Gouvia):** 26610-91.376, 26610-91.745
- **K.T.E.L. long-distance buses (Green line, terminus: Avramiou St):** 26610-39.950.
Daily to: Afiona, Arilla, Agios Georgios Pagon, Agios Gordios, Agios Matthaïos, Agios Stefanos, Avliotes-Barbati, Ermones, Glyfada, Kassiopi, Kavos, Korakiana, Liapades, Loutses, Mesongi, Palaiokastritsa, Pyrgi-Ypso, Roda-Acharavi, Sidari, Spartera.
- **City buses (Blue line, terminus:**

Sarroko Square), tel: 26610-39.859.

Daily to: Kanoni, Analipsi, Potamos, Temploni, Kastellanoi, Kouramades, Perama-Benitses, Kontokali-Gouvia-Dasia, Afra-Agios Ioannis; Achilleio-Gastouri.

• **"Ioannis Kapodistrias" Corfu Airport:** 26610-89.600

Hospitals

- **General Hospital:** 26613-60.400
- **Agros Health Centre:** 26630-71.312
- **Agios Markos Health Centre:** 26610-93.815
- **Lefkimmi Health Centre:** 26620-31.466

Museums

- **Museum of Asian Art:** 26610-20193
- **Museum of Ceramic Art:** 26610-27.370
- **Archeological Museum:** 26610-30.680
- **Byzantine Museum (at Panagia Antivouniotissa):** 26610-38313
- **Dionysios Solomos Museum:** 26610-30674

Website for Corfu, Diapontia Islands and Paxoi:
www.corfuvisit.net

Municipality of Corfu – Tourist Portal: www.zoomcorfu.gr

12. A philharmonic band of Corfu, in front of Sts. Michael and George Palace.



13. Aeroplane landing at the airport of Corfu, located in the middle of Chalikiopoulos lagoon.

Trips around Corfu Island

Corfu's stunning scenery, the touristic attractions, dream beaches and entertainment opportunities are not to be found in the capital only. From one end to the other, Corfu has many surprises in store for the visitor. The road network is very good leading to fascinating locations to the north, middle and south Corfu.

Mesi (Middle) Corfu

Gouvia

2

It is a popular tourist resort with very good hotels and fish tavernas. There is a well equipped marina at Gouvia and nearby **Kontokali** that is one of the largest in the Mediterranean (counting 1,235 berths). **Distance from the capital:** 9 km NW.

Must see



- The **Venetian shipyards**.

- **Danilia**, a replica of a traditional village.

Gastouri

3

A scenic large village built according to traditional architectural lines, where "Achilleion" is located, the famous palace of the Empress Elisabeth of Austria, wife of Francis Joseph I (known as "Princess Sissy"). **Distance from the capital:** 10 km SW.

Must see



- **Achilleion**, built in 1890. It was designed by Italian architect R. Caritto and involved Achilles as the main theme. After Sissy's assassination (1898), Achilleion was bought by Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II as a summer residence. The palace is now a museum. Exquisite statues (such as Achilles Dying, the Satyr carrying Dionysus on his shoulders, and others) adorn the palace's colonnades and gardens that offer a wonderful view. The interior is decorated with marvellous murals

and paintings inspired by Greek mythology. There is also a Catholic chapel, items that belonged to Sissy and Wilhelm II, etc.

- Empress Elizabeth's **fountain**, under the plane trees.
- Two picturesque villages: **Agioi Deka**, built on a mountainside, and **Kynopiastes** where you will find interesting 17th century mansions and Theotokos church, a three-aisled basilica.

Benitses 4

Benitses is a busy and popular tourist resort with large hotels that get fully booked in summer. There is a small harbour for mooring boats. Tourist growth is significant in the area and most hotels provide facilities to be used as conference centres. **Distance from the capital:** 13.5 km S.

Must see

- **Corfu Shell Museum**
- **Kaiser's Bridge** and its characteristic **jetty**.

Activities

- In the area's beaches you will find a wide range of services on offer such as schools for water sports, tennis and beach volleyball courts, scuba diving schools and shops renting equipment for windsurfing, parasailing etc.

Ypsos 5

It is a cosmopolitan tourist resort. The beachfront of fine sand is lined with hotels and visitors can pick from a wide selection of activities by the seaside. From a certain point, Ypsos changes to **Pyrgi**. **Distance from the capital:** 15.5 km NW.

Must see

- The **National Gallery's** branch.
- **Dasia**, 1.5 km S of Ypsos, a highly touristic area with large hotel complexes and conference facilities. Merlin, the agriculturalist who introduced the well known Japanese Kumquat citrus variety in Greece, had his estate in Dasia.

Activities

- Excursion boat tours to nearby areas.



14. Part of the colonnade at Achilleion, and the statues of Apollo and the Three Graces.

- Short trips by rented boats.
- Water sports.
- Mini-golf, tennis, beach volleyball.
- Camping at Ypsos, Pyrgi, Kato Korakiana and Dasia.

Pelekas 6

A picturesque village situated west of the city. From Kaiser's Observatory in Pelekas, you will enjoy what is probably Corfu's loveliest sunset location. You will also find some amazing sandy beaches such as Kontogialos and cosmopolitan Glyfada. **Distance from the capital:** 16 km W.

Must see

- **Panagia Myrtidiotissa Monastery**.
- **Sinarades** (5 km S), one of the oldest villages on the island, with lovely houses (notice the special architectural features called "voltas"), interesting churches and a Folk Art Museum.
- **Ermones beach**, (6 km NW) where, according to Homer, Odysseus [Ulysses] was shipwrecked and encountered Nausica.

Activities

- Swimming at some of the island's top beaches (Glyfada, Myrtiotissa, Kontogialos).
- Horseback riding at «Pelecas Country Club».
- Camping at Ermones.

Palaiokastritsa 7

Palaiokastritsa is located on the island's north-western side and is one of Corfu's most famous resorts. The beauty of the rolling countryside is unequalled: olive groves as far as the eye can see, luxuriant pine-covered hills, rugged coasts, lacy beaches, six natural coves with golden sand, each surrounded by steep cliffs, and a picture-perfect harbour for boats. You will find that tourist services are of the highest quality! **Distance from the capital:** 25 km NW.

Must see

- The monastery of **Panagia Palaiokastritsa**

15. Corfu is the ideal destination for water sports fans.





16. Kouloura bay and village.

(founded in 1228) on a hilltop. Its ecclesiastical museum is remarkable.

- **Lakones** (3.5 km E), a village with a great view from the "Bella Vista" location.
- **Angelokastro**, a 13th-century Byzantine fort near Krini village (10 km NW).

Activities

- Swimming at refreshingly cool, deeply blue waters at every beach in the area.
- Renting a boat for a trip from the port to the sea caves.
- Scuba diving in the area's fascinating underwater world.
- Camping.

North Corfu

Kassiopi 8

A cosmopolitan seaside resort with a medieval castle nestled amid cypress trees, and a busy yet scenic port. It is a popular destination with marvellous beaches nearby. **Distance from the capital:** 36 km N.

Must see

- The church of **Panagia Kassiopitissa** (restored in the 16th c.)

- The ruins of a **medieval castle** (12th - 13th c.) destroyed by Ottoman assaults in the 16th c. and later on blown up by the Venetians.
- Some of the island's finest and most popular summer resorts with their grand villas, pebble beaches, and tranquil, clear waters; notably **Barbati, Nisaki, Kaminaki, Agni, Kouloura** (the place where novelist Lawrence Durrell lived), **Kerasia, Agios Stefanos Sinion and Avlaki**.
- **Antiotis lagoon (wetland)** covers 400,000 m² and is home to 96 species of migratory birds; it has been included in the NATURA 2000 network.

Activities

- Swimming at the area's popular sandy beaches.
- Powerboat excursions to Kavos Barbaros and the Peristeres rocky islets.

Sidari 9

It is a famous resort at Corfu's northwestern tip. The fine beaches and impressive seaside geological formations of smooth rock have made it a popular destination. On the way to Peroulades village, visit the famous, lovely beach known as **Canal d'Amour**. **Distance from the capital:** 36 km NW.

Must see

- The popular resorts at **Roda** (9.5 km E) and **Acharavi** (12.5 km E) where far stretching sandy beaches are popular with the motley younger generation. Visit the **Folk Art Museum** at Acharavi (opposite the **Roman public baths**) exhibiting traditional items used in daily life by locals over the past two centuries. The objects originated from the collection of V. Spyrou and other residents.

- The **waterfalls** in a verdant area near Nymfes village (15.5 km SE).
- **Cavo Drasti** (approx. 6 km W), where you will be impressed by the cliffs and a magnificent sunset view.
- The southwest idyllic beaches in **Peroulades, Agios Stefanos, Arillas and Agios Georgios ton Pagon**.

Activities

- Swimming and water sports at the area's beach facilities.
- Camping at Agios Ioannis, Karousades (4.5 km E), Roda (9.5 km E) and Arillas (9 km SW).

Peritheia 10

A fine example of traditional architecture, Peritheia is a beautiful old village nestled in Mount Pantokrator. Quite a few houses are in the process of being restored by Greek and foreign

17. The famous Canal d'amour, between Sidari and Peroulades.



residents or visitors. **Distance from the capital:** 44 km N.

Must see



- **Mount Pantokrator** and **Ypsilos Pantokrator Monastery** (elevation 911 m.) where you will enjoy an amazing view. The monastery's church features an impressive gilded iconostasis, old icons and murals.
- **Old Sinies**, an abandoned, architectural gem of a village in the Pantokrator area.

Activities

- Hike on foot or ride an off-road vehicle to Mt. Pantokrator. It is one of Corfu's most impressive routes as the view from that barren mountain and the scenery will definitely make it worth while. If you decide to hike, start from the village of Palia Peritheia (7km S), or Strinylas (approx. 15 km S) and go all the way to the top of Mt. Pantokrator where Ypsilos Pantokrator monastery is located.

- Mountain biking on Mt. Pantokrator.

South Corfu

Mesongi

11

A well-known yet fairly quiet resort, Mesongi is built next to a river estuary, by a far stretching beach of fine sand. **Distance from the capital:** 22 km S.

Must see



- **Episkopiana** village (6 km N), on the hill, above Moraitika. It is Ioannis Kapodistria's birthplace.
- **Chlomos** village (12 km S), built amphitheatrically on a raised area with a fantastic view. You will find a number of buildings that are considered as fine examples of local architecture.

Activities

- Swim at the village's wonderful sandy beach or try the water sports facilities on site.

Agios Matthaios

12

The village is built amphitheatrically in a pris-



18. Issos beach, among the most beautiful ones in Corfu.

tine oak forest at the foot of Gamilio (meaning Nuptial) Mountain, thus named because Alkinoos, the King of ancient Faiakes, was married there. **Distance from the capital:** 23 km SW.

Must see



- **Pantokrator Monastery** (4th c.) and an interesting **Cave** (called "the Sea hole") on account of archeological finds. From that spot the view to the village and the protected wetlands of Lake Korission is captivating.

Agios Georgios Argyradon

13

Go downhill, past Agios Matthaios, towards the main road and turn right southwards. You will reach Agios Georgios Argyradon village and the lovely sandy beach. **Distance from the capital:** 32 km SE.

Must see



- **Lake Korission**, (a natural monument of breathtaking beauty), **Chalikouna beach** as well as the cedar tree forest and the sand dunes found in **Issos** (the longest beach on the island).

Activities

- The strip of land separating the lake from the Ionian Sea is a very popular swimming location as there are beaches and sand dunes. The stretch is extensive and you are certain to find some remote or less busy spots to swim at.
- Hiking from Chalikouna beach up to Agios Georgios beach, via Korission Lake (90 min. route).

Lefkimmi

14

Past Argyrades and Perivoli, you will reach southern Corfu's largest town. It has been known since antiquity due to the 434 BC sea battle between the Corfiotes and the Corinthians at Aktio. At the time, its name was "Lefkimma". Later, the pirates named it "Cavo Bianco". Its port, Melikia, connects Corfu with Igoumenitsa, Parga, and Syvota (in Ipeiros). **Distance from the capital:** 41.5 km SE.

Must see



- The 17th-century **Panagia Arkoudila** monastery. Its fortified tower was the monks' refuge during pirate raids. The monastery has been built in a forest, on the island's southernmost cape.

- The **old Salt Mines** (Alykes – 3 km N) with their small Agios Ioannis church, the Venetian salt warehouses and the sheltered fishing boat wharf; visit popular **Kavos** village (6 km S) and experience the pulsating nightlife. There is also a fine sandy beach with water sports facilities.

Activities

- Swim at Alykes or Molos beach at a tourist resort offering a wide choice of water sports facilities.
- Hiking from Molos (6km N) up to cape Lefkimmi (via the salt mines, a 45 min. walk) and from Kavos up to Panagia Arkoudila Monastery (60 min. walk).

19. The village of Agios Georgios Pagon and the sandy beach.



DIAPONTIA Islands



20. Diapontia Islands are ideal for underwater activities.

Diapontia Islands namely Ereikoussa, Mathraki, Othonoi and smaller, uninhabited islets are an Ionian Sea group of islands located close to the north-western edge of Corfu.

Ereikoussa 1

It is the northernmost island of the group, verdant and ideal for a tranquil vacation with few yet gorgeous beaches where the trees reach up to the sand. The locals are olive tree growers, fishermen, or in the tourism business. There is a shuttle boat service to the city of Corfu, Agios Stefanos Avlioton and Sidari. **Distance from Corfu's Cape Drastis:** 6 nautical miles NW.

Must see

- **Porto**, the island's port and main village with an extensive beach where a variety of services are offered.

Activities

- Swimming at Porto and Braghini.
- Spear fishing.
- Hiking on the forest trails leading to the Merovigli hilltop.

Useful phone numbers (+30)

- **Community Office:** 26630-71.703
- **Police Station:** 26630-72.400
- **Rural Clinic:** 26630-71.505

Mathraki 2

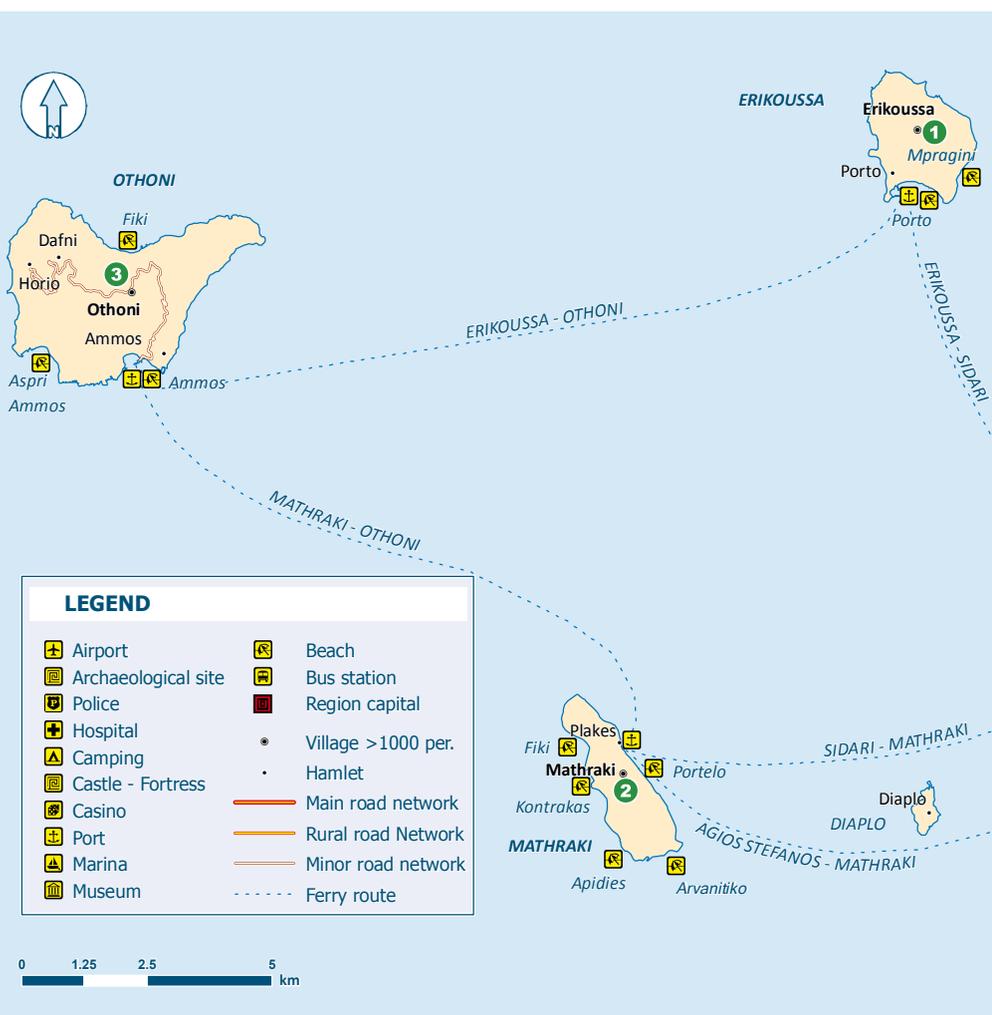
This is the southernmost, smallest island of the Diapontia group, a spear fisherman's paradise with beautiful reefs, rocky islets and a seabed that is full of life. There is a shuttle boat service from **Plakes**, Mathraki's port, to the city of Corfu, Agios Stefanos Avlioton and Sidari. **Distance from Corfu's Cape Kefali:** 4.5 nautical miles W.

Must see

- Kontraka's old port in **Fyki**, on the west coast. Past Cape Katergo, the sea waters in the area are ideal for underwater spear fishing. The old stone belfry of Agia Triada's

21. An aerial photo of Ereikoussa.





church is also worth your visit.

- The churches of: **Agios Nikolaos** (1675) in the island's northern area (Kato Panta) and **Agios Spyridon** in the south (Ano Panta).
- Karavi, Leipso, Diaplo and Plaka **rocky isles**.

Activities

- Swimming in the vast Portelo beach stretching across the entire NE side of the island, at Arvanitiko, Fyki and Apidies.
- Fishing and scuba diving in Portelo.
- Hiking along the stone trails leading to Merovigli hilltop (155m).

Must see



- **Ormos Ammos** (Sand Cove): From here, take a boat to the beach of blue-green waters, and find the cave where, according to the myth, Calypso kept Odysseus [Ulysses] in captivity.
- **Dafni** and **Chorio**, two lovely villages.
- The 1872 **lighthouse** on Cape Kastri (NE edge of the island).
- Kastrino and Ostrako, two **rocky isles** near Cape Kastri.

Activities

- Swimming at Ammos, Aspri Ammos, and Fyki.
- Spear fishing
- Sailing

Useful phones numbers (+30)



- **Community Office:** 26630-72.132
- **Police Station:** 26630-71.592
- **Rural Clinic:** 26630-71.550
- **Port Authority:** 26630-72.280

22. A beach at Othonoi.



Useful phone numbers (+30)



- **Community Office:** 26630-81.190
- **Police Station:** 26630-72.400
- **Rural Clinic:** 26630-71.676

Othonoi

3

The largest island of the group is Othonoi, located on the Greek territory's westernmost edge. The outstanding natural beauty is complemented by traditional houses, old churches, and ruins of Venetian castles. There is a shuttle boat service running from **Ammos**, Othonoi's port, to the city of Corfu, Agios Stefanos Avlioton and Sidari. **Distance from Corfu's Cape Drastis:** 12 nautical miles W-NW.

PAXOI (Paxi)



23. Mesovrika beach, Antipaxoi.

All that you need for a quiet, memorable vacation is on this island: lacy beaches, small coves, green hills with olive trees, imposing cliffs, sea caves and particularly interesting hewn stone cisterns dotting the island. Its small size (area: 13 sq. km, coastline: 30 km) invites the visitor to explore it from end to end on foot.

Tradition has it that Paxoi used to be part of Corfu Island until Poseidon tore it apart with his trident so that he may have a secluded spot to enjoy the company of his beloved Amfitriti. Under Venetian rule, commercial, maritime and agricultural activities thrived on the island.

Gaios 1

It is the island's capital town and port, ideal for sun-and-sea vacations. The image of the port wedged in the narrow channel between Paxoi island and Agios Nikolaos isle is considered one of the prettiest in the Ionian Sea. There are cafés and fish tavernas by the pier.

Must see

- The church of **Agios Charalampos** (the island's patron saint) and **Agioi Apostoloi** church where there are interesting murals.
- The **Museum**, housed in the Venetian-turned-British Governor's Mansion of former times. There are finds from antiquity, household utensils, weaving articles and a small gallery exhibiting works of art by Chr. Aronis, a local painter.
- **Agios Nikolaos isle**, opposite the port, featuring a Venetian fort (1423), two small churches, and a windmill.
- **Panagia** islet where you can visit Panagia's Monastery and a picturesque lighthouse.
- **Lesianitis windmill** (1780) now deserted, near Tranakatika village (2 km SW).

Events

- Classical Music Festival in the summertime.
- The August 15th feast on the small island of Panagia.
- Agios Gaios' icon placed at the head of a religious procession on June 29th with the participation of the Metropolitan (Bishop) and Corfu's philharmonic bands.
- "Neroladia" fair, in mid-July.

Activities

- The island is ideal for relaxation. However, apart from tavernas and cafés, there are also nightclubs and bars at the port area.
- Swimming at Kloni Gouli, Kamini, Kaki Lagkada, Alati, Plakes, Ballos, Levrechio, Pounta, and Kipos.
- An island tour by small boat.
- Tennis and mini golf.
- Sailing around the islets close to Paxoi.
- Hiking and mountaineering.

Useful phone numbers (+30)

- **Municipal Office:** 26623-60.300
 - **Police Station:** 26620-32.222
 - **Port authority:** 26620-32.259
 - **Rural Health Centre:** 26620-31.466
 - **Museum:** 26620-32.566
- Website: www.paxi.gr

24. The small harbour at Longos, Paxoi.





25. Gaios harbour (Paxoi) is a much photographed spot in the Ionian Sea.



Trips around Paxoi Island

Ozias 2

It is the island's oldest settlement with traditional stone-built houses and ruins of old churches the most important one being that of Agia Marina (8th c.). Swim at the cove by the village. Distance from Gaios: 1.5 km S.

Must see

- **Mongonisi**, a small island linked to Ozias by a bridge.
- **Kaltsonisi**, frequently visited by people who own or rent boats.

Magazia 3

This is a village with stone-built houses and elaborate dry stone courtyard walls. The **Oil Museum** is housed in an 18th c. oil mill (tel. 26620-30.043). On Paxoi's west coast, near the village, there are approx. 40 fascinating sea caves called **gráves**, with impressive vaults. The ones best known are by the cliffs of Erimitis and Achai bays. You will also come across the church of **Ypapanti** (1601), 2km NW, featur-

ing an impressive belfry (1774) and interesting murals. **Distance from Gaios:** 4 km NW.

Activities

- Hiking. A network of trails goes past Magazia and continues along the island's western part through some incredible landscape.
- Diving in the sea caves (gráves).

Longos 4

It is Paxoi's smallest harbour. **Distance from Gaios:** 5.5 km NW.

Must see

- The old G. Anemogiannis **oil mill & soap factory**.

Activities

- Swimming at Marmari, Kipos, Levrechio, Glyfada, Kipiadi, and Monodendri.
- Boat excursions from the harbour to nearby beaches.

Lakka 5

This picturesque village of beautiful houses, alleys, and small squares is located in the island's northern part amid flourishing vegetation. **Distance from Gaios:** 7.5 km NW.



26. Dense vegetation ends at the sea shore in Lakka, Paxoi.

Must see

- **Agios Andreas'** church.
- **Ypapanti sea cave**.
- The **sunset** from the lighthouse (1919).

Activities

- Swimming at Charami, Kanoni, Planoi, Orkos, Arkoudaki and Lakkos.
- Boat excursions from the port to nearby beaches.

Getting there

Travel by ferryboat from Igoumenitsa, or take

the small boat from Parga or Corfu. Another option is to use the flying dolphin or watertaxi service from Corfu.

Antipaxoi (Antipaxi) 6

It is a pretty, miniature of an island, southeast of Paxoi (3 nautical miles from Gaios), known for its fantastic beaches. **Voutoumi**, a beach of exotic beauty, is among the finest in Greece. Another two gorgeous beaches are **Vrika** and **Mesovrika**. **Agrapidia** is the small port connecting the island with Paxoi. There is a group of rocky isles opposite the southern coastline.

27. Picturesque narrow street at Gaios.



LEFKADA



28. The impressive rocks and lighthouse at Cape Lefkata, Lefkada.

Lefkada or Leucas Island (area: 302.5 sq.km) is surrounded by a total of 24 islets - Aristotle Onassis' Skorpios being one of them. It connects to the opposite coast of Central Greece via a floating swing bridge (length: 50 m). The bridge offers easy access to Lefkada to visitors from all over Greece as it connects to parts of Egnatia Odos [Road] junction, Preveza-Aktio sea tunnel, Central Greece's Aktio International Airport and the ports in Igoumenitsa (Ipeiros) and Patras (Peloponnese). On Lefkada you will find noteworthy sights, churches and monasteries, picturesque villages, lush vegetation, idyllic coves of turquoise waters, busy and secluded beaches of stunning beauty, a significant cultural heritage and hospitable locals.

Up until the 6th c. BC, Lefkada was part of the Akarnania coastline. It owes its name to Lefkata, the cape with the towering rugged white cliffs on the island's southern tip. Lefkada has been inhabited since Neolithic times and flourished as a Corinthian colony. In 1204, after Constantinople's occupation by the Franks, it became part of the Despotate of Epirus [Ipeiros]. Later on, the Turks, Venetians, French and British occupied the island. In 1864, it became part of Greece along with the other Ionian Islands.

Lefkada Town 1

Lefkada is the island's capital and port town (population: approx. 8,000). It is linked to the coast of Central Greece via a floating swing bridge. The town planning includes picturesque alleys, small squares, traditional houses, elaborate belfries and paved pedestrian zones, according to the Medieval European urban planning style. Its historic centre has been built following the Venetian urban design plan, known as a "fish backbone" plan, unique in Greece and Europe and a fine example of excellent anti-seismic construction. The city is surrounded by a canal and a lagoon, while, farther north, lies Gyra, a sandy beach that forms a fine circle, dotted with windmills and scant vegetation.

Town promenade

- To the **lagoon**, one of the Ionian Sea's most significant wetlands, home to magnificent swans, egrets, wild ducks, wild geese, and Eurasian coots. It is protected by the Ramsar Convention as a wetland of international importance. There is also an *ivari*, a fish farm where fish grow in their natural environment.
- To **Agia Mavra fort**, at the town's entrance, constructed by a Sicilian named Giovanni Orsini in 1300, next to the artificial canal on a lagoon islet. Several additions were made later by the Venetians and the Turks. There is a lighthouse on the fort as well as Agia Mavra's chapel.
- To **Bosketo Park**, where the island's *intellegenzia* used to meet in former times. It is deco-

rated with busts of some of the island's eminent scholars.

- To the **pedestrian zone along the coast** lined with the younger generation's hangouts, cafés, and music bars.
- To the **central square** with many restaurants and cafés where Agios Spyridonas church is located (late 17th c.) with an interesting iconostasis and icons. The main town mall (along **Melas Street**) starts from this point.
- To **Kouzounteli** (or Kouzoumpei) area, where age-long plane trees stand next to traditional coffee shops that serve freshly ground coffee and soumada drink made from fragrant almonds.
- To the **Archeological Museum**. Finds (mid-Paleolithic times - 4th c. AD) come from tombs excavated at Nydri, burial grounds of the ancient town of Lefkada, etc.
- To the **Public Library**, housed in a neoclassical building. There is an extensive collection of printed documents and post-Byzantine icons painted in the style of the Eptanesian iconography school by eminent religious iconographers such as Doxaras, Roussos, etc.
- To **Charamogleios Eidiki Lefkadiaki Library** [a library treating exclusively local themes] exhibiting rare books, gravures and maps. The art gallery is often the venue for painting and photography exhibitions. The library's collection has been included in the Guinness Book of Records.
- To the **"Pantazis Kontomichis" Folk Art Museum**, established in 1937 and managed

29. The bridge at the canal bordering Lefkada town.





by the "Orpheus" Music and Literature Association. Exhibits include a wide and rare collection of items related to local everyday life and work.

- To the **Phonograph-Memorabilia Museum** whose exhibits include old phonographs, vinyl records, decorative antique items, old banknotes etc.

- To the agelong **Elaionas** (Olive Grove), lying west, on the town outskirts.

- To **Megalos Avlaimonas** and **Mikros Avlaimonas** wetlands, two natural-habitat fish farms near the city.

- To the windmills at **Gyra**.

- To **Fryni** (2 km SW), a small village on a slope with a fantastic view.

- To **Tsoukalades** (7 km SW), a traditional village.

Churches

- **Agios Minas**. The town's most noteworthy church boasts an exquisite wood-carved iconostasis, icons painted by great iconographers e.g. Kontarinis and Roussos, and oil paintings by Doxaras, Koutouzis, Ventouras and others. This initially small baroque-style church was founded on 1707 and was rebuilt to its present size after the damage it sustained in 1724.

- **Agios Nikolaos** (1687): the wood-carved iconostasis is remarkable.

- **Christos Pantokrator**, founded in 1700. The



30. Lefkada's lagoon. Agia Mavra fort is in the background.

final resting place of the novelist A. Valaoritis is in the churchyard.

- **Panagia ton Vlachernon**, in Elaionas. On Meatfare Sunday of 1821, at the instigation of Ioannis Zampelios, one of the local leading members of *Filiki Etairia* [Society of Friends], this historic church was the place where chieftains and elders from Roumeli pledged themselves to take part in the Greek War of Independence. The Gospel Book they took their oath on is still preserved.

- **Dormition of Theotokos** (the Mother of God), on the NW side of the lagoon. It is the

oldest church on the island, a single-naved construction with a large semicircular arch, built in the 15th c.

- **Agios Ioannis Antzousis**, a small, picturesque church on the beach by the same name.

- **Panagia Faneromeni Monastery**, 2 km SW of Fryni. Built on a hill covered with pine trees, it is one of the island's most important monuments with a historic course that goes possibly back to the Apostles' times. Panagia Faneromeni is Lefkada's patron saint and is celebrated on the Pentecost (Holy Spirit) Monday. The 1876 icon of Panagia is preserved in the monastery and has

31. Windsurfing by Agios Ioannis beach.



32. Panoramic view of Syvota bay, a mini fjord-like formation.



been painted by Benjamin Kontrakis, a Mount Athos monk. Visit the **Ecclesiastical Museum** on the same grounds, where interesting items are exhibited, originating from churches and monasteries on the island, and dating from the second Turkish Occupation (1479-1684) until 1864 when the island became part of Greek territory. You will find particularly interesting works of art by Eptanesian painters; ecclesiastical manuscripts and old documents dating to times before and after the 1821 Greek War of Independence; silver artefacts (crosses, chalices, trays etc); sacerdotal vestments and a collection of 18th-19th century antimins (or antimensions – consecrated altar cloth).

Events

- International Folklore Festival. As of 1962, bands and artists from all over the world meet in Lefkada every August and exchange the product of their cultural and artistic folklore in the fields of dancing, music, and traditional heritage.
- The Discourse & Art Festival. It has been organised by the Cultural Centre of Lefkada

since 1955 and involves theatrical and music events, exhibitions, conferences, and poetry nights. It is one of Greece's oldest cultural institutions along with the Athens Festival.

- Wine festival that takes place in Sfakiotes Municipality on Frya Square, around the historic Frya Well.

Activities

- Swimming. If you stay in Lefkada town, you can swim at Kastro, Gyra, Myloi, and Agios Ioannis Antzousis. Around the island you will discover some amazing beaches and to the island's east there are numerous beautiful, wooded isles.
- Visiting the sea caves. Farther south, Kalamos and Kastos isles boast beaches and sea caves of great beauty.
- Bicycling; the town of Lefkada as well as the nearby coastline are ideal for a bicycle ride. Go round the lagoon, following the exceptional scenic route: Agia Mavra - Gyra - Myloi - Ai Giannis - Lefkada.
- Marina: it is located at the town's east side, and is considered to be the best equipped ma-

33. Paragliding over Kathisma beach.



34. Lefkada's marina.

rina in Greece. There are 500 berths, a control tower, a multi-purpose building, a yachting club, an office-and-shops complex, a small hotel, a boat maintenance and repair unit, a parking lot, 300 winter-secure berths ashore, and recreational open-air facilities (tel: 26450-26.645, fax: 26450-26.642, website: www.medmarinas.com).

Sports

- Kite surfing in Myloi beach.
- Mountain biking: the island's tall, green mountains are criss-crossed by routes and trails that are ideal for biking. Rent your mountain bike in Lefkada town.
- Parapente (paragliding) over Kathisma beach. Your instructor and double parachute equipment will guarantee your safety.

Useful phone numbers (+30)



- **Lefkada Regional Unit - Tourism Section (Lefkada, Meganisi, Kalamos, Kastos):** 26453-60.755
- **Municipal Office:** 26453-60.511-5
- **Police Station:** 26450-29.370
- **Traffic Police:** 26450-29.379
- **Port Authority:** 26450-22.176
- **Aktio Airport (Central Greece):** 26820-26.113

- **KTEL Long-distance buses:** 26450-22.364, 26450-22.795
- **Hospital:** 26450-25.371
- **Vasiliki Rural Health Centre:** 26450-31.065
- **Archeological Museum:** 26450-21.635
- **Public Library:** 26450-22.502
- **Charamogleios Eidiki Lefkadiaki Library:** 26450-21.465
- **"Pantazis Kontomichis" Folk Art Museum:** 26450-22.778
- **Phonograph - Memorabilia Museum:** 26450-21.088
- **Ecclesiastical Museum - Panagia Faneromeni Monastery:** 26450-21.105

Website for Lefkada, Meganisi, Kalamos and Kastos:
www.lefkada.gr

Trips around Lefkada Island

Clockwise, east to west

Kariotes

2

It is a village on the island's east coast, with modern tourist facilities while keeping to the old traditional architectural style. At "Spasmeni Vrysi" location there is a well equipped camping site. **Distance from the capital:** 3.5 km SE.

Must see

- **Alexandrou salt mines.** Opposite them, visit **Alexandrou fort** built on a small isle.
- The ruins of **ancient Nirikos** or Lefkada (2nd millennium BC) one of the largest, area-wise, ancient Greek towns, near Kalligoni village (2 km N).
- **Palioi Kariotes**, a traditional village (4 km SW).

Lygia

3

It is the island's main fishing town with a tourism infrastructure of high standards. **Distance from the capital:** 6 km SE.

Must see

- **Katouna** (4 km S), a picturesque village with fantastic cobblestone alleys, traditional houses, nice little tavernas as well as the view to the salt mines and Alexandrou fort.
- **Panagia** church belfry and the iconostasis of **Agios Varvaros** church are also particularly interesting.

Nikiana

4

This is a picturesque fishing village and a tourist destination, built at the foot of Mount Skaros near a forest of age-long oak trees. **Distance from the capital:** 9.5 km S.

Must see

- **Agioi Pateres** Monastery (3.7 km SW)



35. The famous Skorpios Island, owned by the Onassis family.

and the monks' retreat; the location offers a panoramic view.

- **Agios Georgios** Monastery (6 km SW), below Skaroi forest, was founded according to various accounts before 1500 and prospered during the Turkish Occupation. The monastery's church is decorated with remarkable murals especially the eastern wall that has remained practically intact. The iconostasis dating back to 1724 is a replica of the one found in Agios Minas church in Lefkada town.
- The traditional mountain villages **Kollyvata** (6 km SW), **Alexandros** (7 km SW) and **Vafkeri** (13.5 km SW).

Activities

- Windsurfing
- Mountaineering
- Fishing
- Scuba diving centres offer diving excursions in the company of certified divers.
- Camping at Episkopos area.

Nydri

5

The island's biggest tourist resort lies along the eastern coast. It boasts an ultra-modern marina and an intense nightlife. Nydri faces **Prigkiponisia** (i.e. Madouri, Cheloni, Skorpios, Skorpidi and Sparti islands). There is a ferryboat service run-

ning to Meganisi, Ithaca, Kefalonia and Central Greece. **Distance from the capital:** 17 km S.

Must see

- **Madouri** Island, home to Aristotelis Valaoritis, a major Greek poet, and Aristotle Onassis'
- **Skorpios** Island, where swimming is allowed.
- The sheltered **Vlycho** bay and the verdant cape Agia Kyriaki, the site of the small Agia Kyriaki church; the Nymphs Cave; and the tomb of archeologist Wilhelm Dörpfeld (1853-1940).
- **Dimosari ravine**, (2.5 km W) where, you can enjoy a swim in the waterfalls cascading into it.
- **Perigiali** (2 km N), a seaside village offering an incredible view of Prigkiponisia, as well as **Neochori** (5 km W).
- **Vlycho** (3 km S), a seaside village in the nook of the bay and **Geni**, the scenic tourist area situated on the opposite coast (5.5 km SE).
- The 18th-century historic **Evangelistria Monastery** (Red Church) built high on the mountain.

Activities

- Scuba diving: Similarly to Nikiana, scuba diving centres organise underwater explorations.
- Other water sports (water skiing, wakeboarding, parasailing and fun rides on "bananas" or "ringos" pulled by a motor boat).
- Sailing (620-berth ultra-modern marina)
- Mountain biking.
- Camping at Vlycho-Geni.
- Hiking from Geni towards Agia Kyriaki.

36. A general view of Nydri and verdant Prigkiponisia.





37. Egkremnoi: a white pebbled beach with turquoise waters.

Poros 6

Poros is southeastern Lefkada's "balcony" overlooking Arkoudi, Oxies, Ithaca, and Kefalonia islands. Swim in the crystal-clear waters of **Mikros Gialos**, where you can also find a well-equipped camping site. **Distance from the capital:** 26 km S.

Must see



- The **ancient country estate** ("Pyrgi" location) where part of its 4th-3rd c. BC square tower remains.
- Picturesque **Syvota** village (11 km SW),

located in a fjord, a favourite destination among sailing fans.

Vasiliki 7

It is southern Lefkada's tourist hub with abundantly flowing streams and a vibrating night-life. Take the ferry for a visit to the captivating Porto Katsiki beach, Agiofylli beach, Kefalonia and Ithaca. **Distance from the capital:** 37.5 km SW.

Must see



- The villages **Ponti** (2 km W) overlooking

38. Cape Lefkata is one of Lefkada's most impressive landscapes.



39. Vasiliki bay, internationally known to windsurfers.

the bay, **Agios Petros** (7 km N), **Marantochori** (7.5 km E) – there is a campsite there – and **Evgiros** (8.5 km SE).
 • Beautiful **Syvros** village (8 km NE). Visit the 1809 restored watermill; the flowing springwaters in "Piges Kerasias"; Karoucha cave and the villages **Vournikas** (2 km E) and **Agios Ilias** (6 km N) at a 620 m. elevation. Enjoy the fantastic view of the surrounding area.

Activities

- Swimming in Vasiliki, Agiofylli, Ammoussa and Afteli beaches.
- Windsurfing: Vasiliki bay is a destination widely known on account of the particular climate conditions and favourable winds, making it very popular among windsurfing fans.
- Water sports: water skiing, wakeboarding, parasailing and "banana" or "ringo" fun rides pulled by a motor boat.
- Mountain biking.
- Horseback riding: various riding farms organise outings on horseback out in the country.
- Camping.

Athani 8

The village, built in an amphitheatre-like manner (elevation: 340 m), overlooks the Ionian Sea. **Distance from the capital:** 34.5 km SW.

Must see



- **Dragano** (2.5 km N), a mountain village famous for producing top-quality honey.
- The old **Agios Nikolaos Niras** church, 12 km S of Athani.
- The **lighthouse** and the ruins of **Apollo's sanctuary** at cape Doukato (Lefkata or Cape Kyra), 17 km S (the last 4.5 km are a dirt road). That breathtaking location of rugged cliffs and magnificent sea view is also known as "Sappho's Jump"; legend has it that this was the spot where the lyric poetess of antiquity jumped off from, taking her own life.

Activities

- Swimming at Egkremnoi and Porto Katsiki, two of Greece's loveliest beaches.

Agios Nikitas 9

It is a cosmopolitan, seaside tourist resort. **Distance from the capital:** 13 km SW.



40. Porto Katsiki, Lefkada's most famous beach, is among the six top ones in the Mediterranean.



41. Traditional wedding in Lefkada.

Must see



- Nearby **Kalamitsi** (7 km S), a mountain village that keeps a genuine traditional character.

Activities

- Swimming at Kathisma, a location of great natural beauty with an inviting beach, where you will also find a well-equipped campsite; at Pefkoulia beach; and at Myloi, a tranquil beach accessible by small boat.

Mountain trips

Sfakiotes 10

This is a group of traditional villages, namely **Lazarata** (seat of Lazarata municipality, 10 km SW of the capital), **Spanochori**, **Kavalos**, **Asprogerakata**, **Pinakochori**, **Exantheia** and **Drymonas**. They are built in an amphitheatre-like manner on semi-mountainous terrain around a fertile valley. It is said that Cretan settlers who came here in the 16th or 17th c. named the area after Sfakia – their homeland.

Must see



- The skilfully built **Turkish wells** dating to the

1478-1684 period. In the old days, one of them supplied water to all the villages in the area.

- **Profitis Ilias** Monastery, in **Spanochori**.
- **Drymonas** traditional village.
- The area's **exquisite belfries**.
- **Kontomicheio Folk Art Museum** run by **Sfakiotes Municipality**, located in a pine-covered area, in Kavalos. It demonstrates the importance of pre-industrial era tools and the socioeconomic framework of Lefkada's working class during the period mentioned above. Exhibits include tools of various trades (shoemakers, farmers, carpenters, barbers, masons, lumberjacks etc), replicas of local home interiors (kitchen, oven), collections of old photographic material, hand-woven fabrics and traditional costumes.
- **Melissa ravine**, (crossed by a network of trails) with ruins of small settlements, old watermills, stone bridges, wells, and many springs.



42. Agios Nikitas - the village and beach.

Events

- Wine festival on Frya Square, by the historic well, organised by Sfakiotes municipality.

Karya 11

It is a widely known mountain village (elevation: 500 m) with a fantastic plane tree shaded square, busy café-bars and restaurants. The exquisitely crafted traditional "*karsanika*" embroideries have won the place a fine reputation. **Distance from the capital:** 13.5 km S.

Must see



- **Maria Koutsochero Folk Art Museum of Lefkada embroidery**. In this small private museum where looms, woven fabrics and *karsanika* embroideries are exhibited, the visitor has the opportunity to get to know the lifestyle, character and the folk culture of Lefkada's mountainous areas.



43. Flowing waters in Sfakiotes wooded area.

- **Pigadisanoi** village (2.5 km N).
- **Agios Ioannis Prodromos** monastery (at Livadi, 4.5 km E) founded in 1605. It is said that chieftain S. Bouas or Grivas was interred there in 1622. There are remarkable murals in the church that date back to 1736-1753.

Events

- Detailed representation of a traditional wedding in Lefkada, on August 11th.
- "Riganada" feast, during which home-baked bread sprinkled with olive oil, salt and oregano is offered together with salted sardines.

Egklouvi 12

It is a beautiful traditional mountain village (elevation: 730 m) built in a green area. It is famous for producing delicious lentils that are one of the best varieties found in Greece. Other cultivations include chickpeas, broad fava beans, and a rare grape variety called "vertzami" possibly introduced to the area by the Venetians in 1684. **Distance from the capital:** 18.5 km S.

Must see



- **Profitis Ilias** country chapel (2.5 km N) offering a fine panoramic view.



44. Hiking in Dimosari gorge.

- “**Voltoi**” rural monuments; they are unique, dome-like shaped adobe cabins exclusively found in the area.
- **Vafkeri**, a traditional village (6.5 km E). There is also an interesting, deserted, 16th c. monastery, that of **Assomatou Archangelou Michail** (Bodiless Archangel Michael), located 3 km S.
- The main worship area of the historic, though deserted today, **Red Church** (Evangelismos Monastery, 1478), 7 km NE (E of Platystoma village).

Events

- Lentil feast in the area of Agios Donatos country chapel (3 km W of the village). It takes place during the first days of August and a lentil dish is offered with salted sardines on the side.

Nearby islands

Meganisi 13

A green island (area: 20 sq. km; population: 1,100) lying 4 nautical miles away from Nydri

with ferry runs to and from it. Tradition has it that this was the island of the ancient Tafioli. According to Homer, Odysseus [Ulysses] entrusted his ships to their king, Mentor, before departing for Troy. Other sources maintain that this is Asteris Island cited in the Homeric epics.

There are three traditional villages, each with a picturesque harbour: Atherinos is the harbour in **Katomeri** village (the municipal seat); **Vathy** harbour bears the same name as the village and Spilia is the harbour in **Spartochori** village. On this island you will find some amazing beaches such as Ampelaki, Balos, Platigyali, Svourna, Kolopoulou, Dichali, Limonari, Elia and Limni. Most of the picturesque bays, mainly the northern ones, provide safe anchorage to sailing boats.

Must see



- **Agios Konstantinos** church in Katomeri and **Agios Ioannis** church 3 km SW of Spartochori.
- **Giovani's Cave** and **Papanikolis Cave**, both in the SW part of the island (accessible only by sea).

Kalamos 14

Kalamos Island (area: 25 sq. km; population: 500), is covered with pine trees, especially the northern part. There is a ferry connection with Mytikas, Central Greece. The island's main activity area is Kalamos port located on the east side. Sailing boats touring the Ionian Sea, drop anchor at this island either to seek shelter from bad weather or for visitors to enjoy the local seafood delicacies at the seaside taverna.

Must see



- **Episkopi**, a small community and the neighbouring Castle of Kalamos or **Kastromonastiro**. Little is known of this impressive monument of which only parts of the stone walls and battlements have remained. This is the burial place of the mother of G. Karaiskakis who was a leading figure of the 1821 Greek War of Independence.
- **Porto Leone**, a small scenic bay that was given this name by the Venetians who mapped out the area. There is an interesting old bridge in that area.

Activities

- Swimming: on the east side at Agios Konstantinos, Myrtia and Asprogyali; further south, at Agriapidia, Pefkoi and Kefali; and on the west side at Kedros, Alexaki, Kipoi and Trachilos.
- Hiking from Kalamos to Episkopi (route length: 7.5 km).

Kastos 15

Kastos (area: 6 sq.km, population: 120) is an elongated isle covered in olive trees. It provides safe anchorage for boats sailing the Ionian Sea. There are very few roads on the island, so there are no cars. **Sarakiniko**, the island's west natural bay has a small jetty that allows mooring even during bad weather. There is a small shuttle boat service running to Central Greece.

Must see



- **Kastos** village, built in an amphitheatre-like style around its harbour. The sparsely built stone houses are two-storeyed and have red

tile roofs, coloured wooden shutters, wooden balconies and they are surrounded by olive trees; a snapshot of times gone by.

The village's few restaurants serve fresh fish, as the area offers excellent catches.

- The large **Agios Ioannis** church, serving the parish and the cemetery. It was built in the mid-19th c. There is an underground space in the church's foundations that houses a vaulted stone structure which is possibly the site of an early-Christian tomb.
- **Fokotrypa**, at Agios Aimilianos. This small cave, recessing 30 m. into the rock and featuring a small sandy beach within, was once a refuge for seals.
- **Agios Aimilianos** country chapel, at a 4-km distance from Kastos village.

Activities

- Swimming: in the south at Ampelakia and Fyki; near the village at Vali and Kalada; and in the north at Agios Aimilianos, Limni, Kamini and Vrisidi.
- Hiking along the island's trails.

45. Vathy, one of the three villages on Meganisi.



KEFALONIA



46. Green areas and blue waters blend beautifully on Kefalonia.

Magnificent scenery, amazing beaches, a rich cultural heritage, great monuments, mountains, castles, distant monasteries and the cheerful, hospitable people are the assets that have turned Kefalonia Island (or Cephallonia) into one of the most attractive destinations. The largest Ionian island lies in the mouth of Patraikos Gulf, between Zakynthos (or Zante) and Lefkada (area: 904 sq. km; coastline: approx. 250 km). It is endowed with an exquisite nature and diverse geological formations, countless coves, and lush vegetation. Ainos Mountain Range towers in the distance (a National Reserve area since 1962 with an abundant and diverse flora and fauna).

In Byzantine times, Kefalonia was part of both the Achaia province and the Eastern Illyria district. Throughout the centuries, it has successively been under Norman, Frankish, Venetian, and Turkish rule. It became Greek territory on May 21st, 1864, along with the rest of the Ionian Islands. During WWII, local resistance to Italians and Germans was sturdy. The film "Captain Corelli's Mandolin", shot on location on this island, is about such an account of resistance.

Argostoli 1

It has been the capital town of the island since 1757. Argostoli is a modern town that keeps many of the traditional architectural elements of the past. It has been built in an amphitheatre-like manner, overlooking Koutavos lagoon, a stopover area for many migratory birds. A large number of neoclassical buildings, large squares and churches grace the town. There is a remarkable diversity of cultural events as the town's Philharmonic Band, choirs, and drama groups are quite active.

Town promenade

- To the central, spacious **Vallianos Square**, where the statue of benefactor P. Vallianos stands surrounded by cafés, restaurants, and bars.
- To **Napier's Garden**, named after British Lord High Commissioner Sir Charles James Napier who, in the mid-19th century carried out many infrastructure works on the island. Though small in size, the garden has a large variety of tree species.
- To **Rizospaston Street**, bordered by palm trees; this is the location of Risospaston Monument.
- To **Lithostroto**, the town's main street lined with shops and haunts of the young.
- To **Kampana square**, halfway down Lithostroto where Kampana belfry stands. It has been restored recently, based on the original plans of the one destroyed in the 1953 earthquakes. From the top, the view of the town and **Kouta-**



47. Argostoli: the commemorative obelisk at Drapanos Bridge.

vos lagoon is marvellous.

- To the **Municipal Market**, by the beach, where the bust of local poet Nikos Kavvadias stands.
- To **Drapanos stone bridge** (also named De Bosset Bridge). Built by the British in 1813, it is 900 metres long and links Argostoli with the opposite coast. Do visit the **Municipal Cemetery** at nearby Drapanos village where there are exquisite marble sculptures and monuments created by famous artists.
- To the **Archeological Museum**, exhibiting finds from various sites on the island, mostly dating from the Mycenaean period.
- To **Korgialeneios Library**, one of the largest in Greece, housing over 55,000 volumes and a rare Byzantine icon collection.
- To the **History and Folk Art Museum**, exhibiting items relating to the island's history

48. The lighthouse in Agioi Theodoroi, Argostoli.





49. Panoramic view of Asos, one of Kefalonia's prettiest, most picturesque villages.



(costumes, weaponry, heirlooms, etc.) and everyday life.

- To **Pharaoh Hill**, offering a panoramic view of the town.
- To **Katavothres**, near Agioi Theodoroi Lighthouse, where the seawater dropping into these underground caverns resurfaces 14 days later at Karavomylos (in Sami area), at the other end of the island!
- To **Agioi Theodoroi Lighthouse**, on the tip of Lassi peninsula where sunset view is enthralling. Originally built in 1829 by the British, it was destroyed in the 1953 earthquakes and was later

rebuilt according to the original plan.

- To the **"Round of Lassi"**, a fantastic circular route starting from Argostoli and going around Lassi peninsula by the sea and the rugged coastline. **Lassi** (2 km W of Argostoli) is a popular tourist resort with two cosmopolitan sandy beaches: Makrys Gialos and Platys Gialos.
- To the **"Botanical Garden"**: Its 8 *stremmata* (8,000 sq.m.) of land is home to endemic and other flora species. There is also a space available for music events.
- To **"Vinerias Wine Cellar & Shop"**, in "Thalassomylos" location where there are local wines



50. Argostoli. Koutavos lagoon is in the background.

and products on display.

- To the **"Natural History Museum"**, at Davgata village (5 km N) which provides information on Kefalonia's and Ithaca's natural environment and marine zone as well as data on the Ainos National Reserve (tel: 26710-84.400).

Churches

- **Agios Nikolaos**, a Catholic church.
- **Panagia i Sissiotissa** (1517), by the main beachfront road.
- **Agia Varvara**, built on a rock, next to Drapanos

51. Argostoli's seafront.





52. "Kefalos" theatre, Argostoli.

bridge, opposite the town.

- **Agios Spyridon** (at Poulata village), with an elaborate wood-carved iconostasis.
- **Panagia**, at Domata, where the temporary coffin that carried Patriarch Gregory V's body is kept.

Events

- Various cultural events take place at "Kefalos", a historic theatre in Argostoli.
- The procession of the island's patron saint, Agios Gerasimos, on August 16th and October 20th.
- Agia Effimia's feast, on July 11th.
- The carnival festivities that take place in many villages.
- The Commemoration of the Union with Greece, on May 21st.

Activities

- Swimming. If you stay in Argostoli you will swim at Kamaroules, Gradakia, Paliostafida,

Makrys Gialos and Platys Gialos.

- You will find a game farm in **Pesada**. There is a ferry service to Zante.
- The island offers many opportunities for religious tourism since many of the Monasteries have guest quarters for pilgrims and visitors alike who wish to become better acquainted with Kefalonia's religious monuments.

Sports

- Scuba diving at Lassi
- Tennis
- Mountaineering
- Beach volleyball
- Water sports
- Hunting
- Mini golf
- Mini football on a 5X5 field
- Swimming in heated pools
- Track & field sports
- Extreme sports and hydromassage at Lassi
- Well-equipped campsite at Fanari.

Useful phone numbers (+30)



- **Municipal Office:** 26713-60.100
- **E.O.T. (Greek National Tourism Organisation) :** 26710-22.248
- **Police Station:** 26710-22.200
- **Tourist Police:** 26710-23.226
- **Traffic Police:** 26710-23.226
- **General Hospital:** 26710-24.641
- **KTEL Long-distance buses:** 26710-22.281
- **Argostoli Port Authority:** 26710-22.244
- **Kefalonia Airport:** 26710-28.808

Museums

- **Archeological Museum:** 26710-28.300
- **Korgialeneio History and Folk Art Museum:** 26710-28.221

Argostoli website: www.argostoli.gr

Trips around Kefalonia Island

Central and southern Kefalonia

Lakithra

2

It is a large village south of Argostoli, surrounded by lovely smaller villages and marvelous sandy beaches. The locals call this entire area "Leivatho". Ferries make runs from Pesada to Zante. **Distance from Argostoli:** 7 km S.

Must see



- **Kourkoumelata, Metaxata, Kaligata, Domata and Svoronata** villages with magnificent neoclassical buildings, beautiful squares and a breathtaking sea view.
- The 1587 **Milapidia Monastery**.
- The 13th-century **Agios Georgios** Venetian

fort, the island's medieval capital, near Travliata village. Its impressive walls and underground passages are in relatively good condition but the Venetian Governor's residence, the barracks, and San Marco Catholic church are in ruins.

- The **Mycenaean tombs** at Mazarakata.
- **Dias** islet with the church of Panagia Vlachernon, opposite Avythos beach.
- **Lourdass beach** area (15.5 km E) and the local choice fresh produce.

Activities

- Swimming at the sandy beaches Minias, Ammes, Ai Chelis, Lygia, Avythos, Agios Thomas,

53. Makrys Gialos: one of the island's most popular beaches.



Trapezaki, Lourdas, Paradeisi, Sisia, Katsonas, Nisi, Lefka and Koroni.

- Horseback riding at Lourdas.

Valsamata 3

The village is built on Omala plateau, where Robola, the famous local grape variety, is cultivated. **Distance from Argostoli:** 11 km E.

Must see

- The **Cooperative Winery** where you can taste and purchase wines, especially Robola, one of the noblest grape varieties produced in Greek vineyards and among Kefalonia's most acclaimed products.
- The **monastery of Agios Gerasimos**, Kefalonia's patron saint. The belfry is situated at the monastery's entrance and has been built according to the Eptanesian (Ionian) architectural style. The monastery is in Omala, near Saranta Pigadia valley and is surrounded by vineyards. The saint's holy relics (*skenoma*) are kept there. In the monastery's old church there is a cave used by the saint as his ascetic retreat. The plane tree the saint planted in 1570 still stands next to that church. Two religious processions take place each year in his honour and thousands of people participate: the first one is on August 16th, in commemoration of his death and the second



55. Ainos National Park.

one is on October 20th, in honour of the translation of his holy relics.

- The **Ainos National Reserve** where the trails will take you through lovely forests of

54. The far-stretching Lourdas beach.



fir trees; one of them is unique in expanse and to a very high degree consists of *Abies Cephalonica*, the black fir, native to Kefalonia. The Reserve is also hosting endemic flora and is a refuge for the small horse breed of the species *Equus caballus*, living in a semi wild state. Ainos' tallest peak is Megalos Soros (elevation: 1,628 m). You can access the mountain via the Argostoli-Sami road.

Activities

- Horseback riding at Mt Ainos foot.
- Hiking along Ainos' trails.
- Cycling route: the tour of Ainos (a 30 km ride).
- 4x4 wheel drive through Ainos starting at the National Reserve's central entrance and ending at Arginia village (a 22 km drive).

Sami 4

Sami is a seaside town built at the foot of two hills on the island's east side, on the location of the ancient town of Sami. It is Kefalonia's sec-

ond largest port and the only one connecting the island to Italy. Dense vegetation covers the surrounding area which is extremely interesting from a geological point of view. **Distance from Argostoli:** 24 km NE.

Must see

- The lake at **Karavomylos** village (4 km NW). This is the point of discharge for the underground course of waters that flow down from Argostoli's *katavothres* (meaning sinkholes), creating a unique geological phenomenon.
- **Melissani Lake cavern**, once the worship site for god Pan's ancient cult, near Karavomylos, accessible by small boat. The sunlight, entering through the cave's collapsed part of the roof, turns everything within the cave into a fairyland of iridescent light.
- The 150-million-year old **Drogarati cave** (4.5 km S) with exquisite stalactite and

56. Melissani cave.





57. Antisamos - aerial photo.



58. The fantastic Myrtos beach, at Myrtos bay.

stalagmite formations. The acoustics within are perfect and the cave often becomes a venue for music and other events.

- **Antisamos cove** (4.5 km E). A big part of "Captain Corelli's Mandolin" (directed by J. Madden, 2001) was filmed next to its turquoise waters.

- **Agrilia Monastery** (3 km NE), dedicated to the Holy Mother of God: the view of Sami bay and Ithaca is amazing.

- **Ancient Sami**, on the same hill where Agioi Fanentes church is (6 km S). The town thrived during the Roman times; there remain parts of the Cyclopean walls, a Hellenistic times wall as well as remnants of an ancient theatre. From this location, the view of the greater area is magnificent.

Activities

- Swimming at the beaches in Sami, Agia Paraskevi and Antisamos.
- Water sports.
- Tennis
- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Horseback riding in Koulourata area (7.5 km S).
- Mini football on a 5x5 field.
- Camping
- Hiking on the Sami - Ancient Sami - Antisamos route

Agia Effimia 5

This seaside village with a beautiful beach is fast becoming a popular tourist destination, as shown by yachts and recreational boats that



moor at its harbour. Drive or go by boat to the beaches: Agia Paraskevi, Kapsolimnionas, Agriotsyko, Giagianna, Gorgotha, Agia Sofia and Kalo Limani. **Distance from Argostoli:** 32 km NE.

Must see



- **Thematon Monastery** (17th c), dedicated to Panagia (the Virgin Mary) and built on the top of a wooded slope of Mount Agia Dynati (approx. 7 km E).
- The traditional villages **Makryotika** (4.5 km W); **Nechoiri** (10 km N); and **Komitata** (12 km N); you will find interesting elements of traditional architecture.
- **Myrtos beach** (9.5 km NW), among the top Mediterranean sandy beaches, where the white expanse of sand is sheltered by towering cliffs.

Activities

- Scuba diving. Underwater outings get organised in the area.
- Hiking along the Drakopoulata - Panagia Thematon Monastery - Makryotika route.

Skala 6

Kefalonia's southernmost village is a well organised resort. See the ruins of a Roman mansion

59. Agia Effimia is the perfect "base" for various outings.



60. The sandy beach in Poros.

with well preserved mosaics as well as the ruins of Apollo's temple. **Distance from Argostoli:** 37 km SE.

Must see



- The 2nd-century BC **Roman mansion's** ruins, containing marvellous mosaic floors.
- The ruins of the Doric **temple of Apollo** (3.5 km N).
- **Palaio Chorio**, the remarkable architectural elements and the watermills found there.
- **Mounta** (3 km SW), an area next to Cape Mounta with a gorgeous beach.
- **Ratzakli** (4 km W), a seaside village

overlooking Kaminia sandy beach. The loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta - caretta*) find refuge here as well as in Mounta.

Events

- Panagia (Our Lady) feast on August 15th, at **Markopoulo** village (12 km W). Notice the harmless, small snakes with the black cross-shaped mark on their head, also known as "Panagia's snakes".

Activities

- Swimming: at the village's beach, in Kaminia, Kateleio and Mounta.

- Mini golf.
- Beach volleyball.
- Tennis.
- Water sports.
- Scuba diving.
- Climbing.
- Hiking along the Pastra – Kateleios route.

Poros

7

It is the island's second main port, a busy town hosting a variety of cultural activities. **Distance from Argostoli:** 40 km E.

Must see



- **Vochynas' ravine** and **Drakaina cave**, the site of archeological finds.
- **Tzanata**, the village where a large, Mycenaean vaulted tomb was excavated, possibly belonging to a dignitary, together with a four-wall, chamber-like tomb (reliquary) of the same era.
- The 13th-century **Atros Monastery**, the oldest one on the island, dedicated to the Nativity of Theotokos (Mother of God).
- The ruins of **ancient Pronnoi**, above Asprogerakas village.

Activities

- Swimming at the village's beaches as well as at Limenia, Kako Lagkadi, Ragia (Aragia), Laza-

rou and Xylomata.

- Biking.
- Climbing.
- Hiking following the Poros – Asprogerakas route.

North

Asos

8

This is a particularly picturesque village, built along the neck of Asos peninsula, in a verdant pine and cypress-covered location, with a Venetian castle towering over it. The sheltered harbour provides safe anchorage for recreational and fishing boats. As you walk down the main road, the view of the village is just lovely. **Distance from Argostoli:** 36.5 km. N.

Must see



- The 16th-century **Venetian castle** and a marvellous view of the surrounding area and the sunset. There remain the castle walls with the arched gate, the Governor's residence, Agios Markos church and parts of the barracks.
- The mountain villages, namely **Patrikata** (8.5 km E) and **Karya** (9 km E). En route, the greater area's view is fantastic.

Activities

- Swimming at the village's beaches; and at Myrtos, 12 km S.

61. Fiskardo, Kefalonia's most cosmopolitan village.





62. Lixouri, Kefalonia's second largest town.

Fiskardo

9

A well-known cosmopolitan town, Fiskardo (known as Panormos in antiquity) is a listed traditional village with lovely houses (some date back to the 18th c) painted with vivid colours, picturesque narrow alleys, tourist shops, restaurants, fish tavernas, bars, and cafés. From this port, there is a shuttle boat service running to Ithaca and Lefkada; it is also a mooring area for luxury yachts since Fiskardo is on the list of destinations preferred by the international jet set. **Distance from Argostoli:** 49.5 km N.

Must see



- **The Roman cemetery and ancient baths** where a recess carved into the rock is called "Queen Fiskarda's Throne" by the locals.
- The 6th c. **early christian church** near Fiskardo's lighthouse. There are ruins of the older 16th c. Venetian lighthouse next to the new one.
- The **Marine and Environmental Museum.**
- **Tzanata, Markantonata and Tzamarelata** mountain villages overlooking Fiskardo.

63. Gerogompos lighthouse. The height of the tower is 13 m.



Activities

- Swimming at Foki, Evreti, Kamini, Emplysi, Kimilia, Dafnoudi, Alaties and Agia Ierousalim.
- Sailing.
- Scuba diving in Fiskardo's sea caves and in the area around Agia Ierousalim.

West

Lixouri

10

Locals call this town "Pikolo Parisi" (little Paris; Italian *Piccolo Parigi*). It is the modern-day commercial and administrative centre of the island's western part with a long cultural and artistic tradition, remarkable churches and monasteries. There are two **libraries** (Iakovateios and Petritseios); the second oldest **Philharmonic School** (after Corfu's Old Philharmonic); and the **Vallianeios Professional School**. There are ferry runs to Argostoli. **Distance from Argostoli:** 31.5 km W.

Must see



- **Pantokrator's** Metropolitan Church.
- The restored, mid-19th-century **Typaldos-Iakovatos Neoclassical Mansion**, housing on the ground floor the Municipal Library with 20,000 volumes, a Byzantine and post-Byzantine icon collection, Gospel manuscripts (dating back to the 10th, 14th, and 15th century) and on the first floor, a collection of personal items belonging to the founding family.
- **Ancient Pali**, at "Palaiokastros" location.
- The Venetian **Kleisoura bridge**, over a wooded gorge (near the road towards Livadi village).
- **Mantzavinata** village (4.5 km SW); nearby "**Kounopetra**" is a rock jutting out of the sea, that used to move until the 1953 earthquakes when its position stabilised. If pristine natural beauty is your thing, visit **Vatsa**, an area near Kounopetra, and enjoy the gorgeous beach.
- The 14th-century **Koroniotissa Monastery** (2.5 km W).
- **Kontogenada** village (15 km NW), the site

of Mycenaean tombs and churches with post-Byzantine icons.

Activities

- Swimming at Lepeda beach, Xi (red sand beach), Megas Lakos and Petanoi.
- Horseback riding in Ritsata near Livadi village (7 km N.).

Kaminarata

11

The 1759 **Kipouraioi Monastery** is in this mountain village. It was a major monastery on the island once and possesses remarkable religious heritage items. The landscape and sunset view are breathtaking. The 1781 **Agia Paraskevi Tafiou Monastery** and **Drakospilia** cave are nearby. Further south, you will find the imposing **Gero-Gompos lighthouse**. **Distance from Argostoli:** 37 km W.

Activities

- Swimming at Platia Ammos, one of the area's most beautiful beaches.

64. Kipouraioi Monastery (Annunciation to the Virgin Mary).



ITHACA (Ithaki)



65. A view of Ithaca, 1819 gravure (by E. Dodwell).

Low profile, hospitable Ithaca Island (or Thiaki as the locals call it) is ideal for relaxed vacations. The second smallest Ionian island, after Paxoi, is said by many scientists to have been the kingdom of Homer's Odysseus [Ulysses] and has been inhabited since prehistoric times. It flourished during the Mycenaean Period (1500-1100 BC) only to fall into obscurity after that glorious period. A number of locals who had settled on neighbouring islands, repatriated during the Venetian occupation (1504). In 1797, Ithaca came under French, then Russian and then Turkish rule until 1809 when it became a British protectorate. It played an important part during the 1821 War of Independence and was united with Greece on May 21st, 1864, along with the rest of the Ionian Islands. Area: 92.6 sq. km, coastline length: 101 km.

Vathy 1

Vathy is Ithaca's capital town and port. The Venetian influence is manifest in this heritage small town featuring beautiful tiled roofs, and picturesque *kantounia* (cobblestone alleys). After the ravaging 1953 earthquake, the biggest part of the town had to be restored or rebuilt anew. The 1668 Sotiras chapel stands on **Lazaretto** isle, at Vathy's port entrance. Under British rule the islet was used as quarantine for infectious diseases and later as a jail.

Town promenade

- To **Panagia** Metropolitan Church, featuring a 1793 wood-carved iconostasis and an old bell tower (1820).
- To **Taxiarchis** church, famous for the Crucifixion icon, said to have been painted by El Greco.
- To the **Drakoulis family neoclassical mansion**, by the beach.
- To the **Archeological Museum**; finds come mostly from the island's southern part and date back to the Mycenaean era up to the Roman times.
- To the **Maritime and Folk Art Museum** (in the old power station building); exhibits include traditional costumes and furniture, trade and agricultural tools and items related to the island's maritime tradition.
- To the library in **Ithaca Cultural Centre**, housing a rare book collection.

- To the **Venetian castle's** ruins.
- To the **Nymphs Cave** or Marmarospilia (3 km W of Vathy) where, according to Homer, Odysseus hid the gifts presented to him by the Faiakes on his return from Troy. Visit nearby **Palaiochora**, a significant Venetian settlement as manifested by the ruins of houses and churches (such as The Dormition of Theotokos Church and the Entry of Theotokos in the Temple Church; both are listed monuments).
- To **Evmaios Cave** (6.5 km S) where, according to tradition, Odysseus met with Evmaios, his faithful servant; continue towards **Arethousa Spring** and the Homeric location "**Korakos Petra**"; the above are located at Marathias area.
- To **Alalkomenes ancient town** ruins (circa 800 BC), on a hill at Aetos area (4 km W), where parts of the Cyclopean walls and rock-carved cisterns still stand. Boats make runs to Kefalonia from Pisaetos, the small harbour in Aetos Bay.

Events

- "Theatrical Contest": amateur drama groups participate in this cultural event.
- Cultural events centred on Homer and Odysseus.
- Exhibitions, concerts, seminars and conferences.
- Festivals: June 30th in Frikes, July 17th in Exogi, July 20th in Kioni, August 5th and 6th in Stavros, August 14th in Anogi and August 15th in Platrethias.

66. Vathy (Deep) took this name because it is located at the innermost point of an enclosed bay.





Activities

- Enjoy yourself in the cafés, bars and tavernas by the port.
- Swimming at Loutsas, Dexia (or Dexa), Aetos, Piso Aetos (Pisaetos), Mnimata, Skinos, Gidaki, Filiatro, Sarakiniko and Kaminia.
- Hiking. There are quite a lot of interesting routes to choose from, the most popular ones being: from Vathy towards Evmaios cave and Arethousa spring or towards Aetos hill (elevation: 378 m); from Perachori to Palaiochora and the Nymphs cave; from Exogi to Kalamos and Platreithias or towards Stavros and Poli; from Platreithias to the areas of Marmakas and Agios Nikolaos, and from Anogi to Mount Niritos top or towards Kioni.
- Diving.

Useful phone numbers (+30)

- **Municipal Office:** 26740-32.795

- **Police Station:** 26740-32.205
 - **Health Centre:** 26740-32.222
 - **Port Authority:** 26740-32.909
 - **Archeological Museum:** 26740-32.200
 - **Maritime - Folk Art Museum:** 26740-33.398
- Ithaca website: www.ithaki.gr

Trips around Ithaca Island

Anogi 2

One of the island's oldest villages, Anogi is built on Mount Niritos at 510 m. above sea level. Visit the 12th c. **Dormition of Theotokos** Church and admire the exquisite 17th-century murals and the 1682 Venetian style belfry. There are also numerous impressive monoliths (called "menir") scattered around the village; *Araklis* and *Kavellaris* are the biggest ones. The historic



67. Kioni, a traditional village.

Panagia Katharon Monastery is 3.5 km to the south; its main church (*katholikon*) was built in 1530 and restoration works took place in the late 17th century. From this point, you will enjoy the stunning view of the island's southern part and the open sea. **Distance from Vathy:** 16 km NW.

Stavros 3

This is a beautiful large village in the island's north side. The bust of Odysseus [Ulysses] stands in the central square. Make a point of visiting the Venetian Tzouganatos residence and the byzantine Sotiras church. Another place of interest is the **Archeological Collection** (tel: 26740-23.955) that includes finds from the **Loizos littoral cave**. **Poli** is the small port of Stavros village, a scenic bay where boats are moored and ferry runs take place to Fiskardo (Kefalonia) and Lefkada. You can go for a swim in Aspros Gialos and Agios Ioannis beaches and from **Lefki** village you can swim in Militera and Koutoupi beaches. **Distance from Vathy:** 16.5 km. NW.

Platreithias 4

It is located in a fertile area, next to **Agioi Saranta**, **Lachos** and **Kalamos** villages. You can swim at Afales and Agios Nikolaos coves. **Distance from Vathy:** 18.5 km NW.

Frikes 5

From this fishing village lying northeast there is a shuttle boat service to Lefkada and Kefalonia. It is said that Frikes used to be Reithros port described in the Homeric Epics. Go for swimming in Limenia and Pera Limenia beaches (access by

boat or through a trail), or try the small beaches along the road towards Kioni. **Distance from Vathy:** 19 km NW.

Exogi 6

It is the island's northernmost village and - some say - the most beautiful one, thanks to its scenic location (you will find here Ithaca's unique pine tree forest of the highest purity). From here, there is a view of Afales, Ithaca's largest bay. The picturesque Panagia Monastery can be seen further up the village, at Pernarakia. According to scholars, Agios Athanasios area and the location of Odysseus' palace are believed to be identical. **Distance from Vathy:** 22.5 km N.

Kioni 7

Kioni is Ithaca's truly cosmopolitan spot, a small port where you will also see the remnants of three windmills. It is a traditional village as well as a busy one. In the summertime, the small port is the mooring place for many yachts. North of Kioni, you will find Mavronas, a pebble beach, and to the south you can reach - by boat only - the secluded beaches of Kritami, Chalkia and Liano Nisaki. **Distance from the capital town:** 23.5 km NW.

68. One of Ithaca's numerous idyllic beaches.





69. The sheltered bay at Vathy, Ithaca, is ideal for water sports.

ZAKYNTHOS (Zante)



70. Zakynthos town (Zante).

Zakynthos is a green island with fertile fields and a temperate climate (area: 406 sq. km; coastline: 123 km). What makes it very interesting is the ever-changing countryside that has resulted in different types of beaches. On the island's southeastern part you will find sheltered coves with sandy beaches of deep blue waters. However, if rugged cliffs and an interesting underwater world are to your liking, you should prefer the western part of the island.

The Venetians, who ruled Zakynthos from 1484 until 1797, called the island "Fior di Levante" (flower of the East) as there are over 7,000 species of flowers on Zakynthos. The third largest island of the Ionian Sea, after Corfu and Kefalonia, is internationally known by the name of Zante. The island's first inhabitant is said to have been Zakynthos, son of Dardanos, Frygia's king. It is believed that he built an acropolis on the site where the Venetian fort was constructed at later times.

Venetian architectural influence has left its stamp on Zante despite the damage sustained due to the seismic activity in the area. After the ravaging 1953 earthquake and the ensuing fire, a number of historic buildings and churches burned to the ground. Consequently, the significant treasures these buildings were housing were buried in the ashes. The town of Zante was rebuilt according to an urban plan where strict anti-seismic regulations applied, and, to a large extent, adhered to the city's former architectural character. In Zante rules also apply concerning the protection of the loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta - caretta*) and the Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus - monachus*).

Zante Town 1

The island's port is in Zante town. Although severely damaged in the 1953 earthquakes there are still many elements that denote a glorious past.

Town promenade

- To **Solomos Square**, surrounded by buildings designed according to the traditional local architecture with arched windows and doorways. The statue of D. Solomos, Greece's national poet, stands in the middle of the square. Buildings around it include the Municipal Cultural Centre that houses the outstanding **Public Historical Library** of Zakynthos - (numbering 55,000 volumes) and the **Post-Byzantine Museum of Zakynthos** with invaluable treasures on display such as gilded statues, icons, and wood-carved works of art.
- To the seafront road or **Strata Marina** (K. Lomvardou Street), the town's busiest area where most of the tourist shops, cafés, bars, and restaurants are. It begins at Solomos Square and ends at Agios Dionysios church (patron saint of the island).
- To **San Marco Square**, where in 1797 the rebelling working class people burnt the *libro d'oro* [italian for *Golden Book (of Nobility)*] and planted the tree of liberty. This paved square is

71. The church of Agios Nikolaos, Solomos square.



72. The statue of D. Solomos at Solomos square.

the meeting place for residents and visitors alike. Visit **Solomos, Kalvos, and Eminent Zakynthians Museum**, that houses, among other exhibits, the statue of national poet D. Solomos sculpted by Georgios Vroutos in 1902.

• To **Rouga**. It is called Alexandrou Roma Street; it begins at San Marco Square and crosses almost the entire town. This street, adorned with impressive arches, has been the town's commercial centre for centuries.

• To the 17th-century **Roma Mansion** (behind Solomos Square), one of the island's most significant historic buildings. It has large reception areas, a library featuring rare volumes, a collection of family portraits, pictures, costumes and weaponry that had belonged to the Roma family, etc.

• To **Grigorios Xenopoulos Museum** (at Faneromeni area, near Agios Dionysios church) dedicated to the well known Zakynthian novelist. Exhibits include his manuscripts, published works, personal items, as well as furniture from his family home.

• To the **Venetian fort**, on a hill overlooking the town, built on the site of Psofis, the ancient acropolis. Within the citadel there are ruins of a Venetian jail and gunpowder magazine, the British barracks and governor's house, as well as byzantine churches.



- To **Bochali**, below the Venetian fort, a picturesque suburb with quiet, narrow streets, old houses, the 9th c. Panagia church, traditional coffee houses and restaurants where you can listen to old Zakynthian music. From here, the view of the town and the greater area is enchanting.
- To **Strani hill**, at a 2 km distance from the town, offering a fantastic view. It is here that poet Dionysios Solomos conceived the "Hymn to Freedom" that became later the Greek National Anthem and "The Free Besieged" as he watched the Siege of Mesolongi town.

Churches

- The 17th-century Renaissance style **Agios Nikolaos tou Molou**, (on Solomos Square) with a byzantine belfry. Agios Dionysios, the island's patron saint, stayed here in 1583.
- The 18th c. **Agios Dionysios** (on the port's south pier) where the holy relics of the patron saint of the island are kept in a silver shrine (*lar-*

nax). The church was built in 1708 and renovated in 1764. Its impressive bell tower is the tallest in the city. The **Ecclesiastical Museum**, a place of culture and collective memory, is housed in the new annex's elevated ground floor; the exhibits include icons and Christian art heritage articles, mostly originating from Metamorfofi Strofadon Monastery.

- **San Marco**, a 1516 Catholic church (at San Marco Square). Its belfry is a replica of San Marco Cathedral in Venice.
- **Agios Georgios**. The members of the Society of Friends, chieftains Kolokotronis, Nikitaras, and Fotomaras, as well as other fighters of the 1821 Greek War of Independence, took an oath on its triptych [three-panelled] icon.
- **Panagia i Pikridiotissa**, at the foot of the castle.

Events

- The Carnival: the town crier goes around the island shouting out the carnival's programme.

On Carnival Sundays, the *Karnavalos* effigy is taken around on a parade. Events conclude with the "Funeral of the Mask".

- Easter. Zante oozes character during the Holy Week; this involves agelong customs ("antenia") as well as a special *typikon* (religious services described in a liturgical book).
- Celebrations honouring the memory of Agios Dionysios include religious processions and other artistic events on August 24th and December 17th.
- Exhibitions, theatrical performances, and other cultural events organised by the Municipality.

Activities

- Swimming. If you stay in town, you can swim in Planos, Tsilivi and Kalamaki.
- Water sports. Seafront hotel facilities house schools for water skiing, windsurfing, parasailing, etc.
- Scuba diving. The area's fascinating underwater world is ideal for underwater "touring", especially on the island's west "untamed" side.
- Make the round of the island on small excursion boats that set off at the town's port.

Useful telephone numbers (+30) ☎

- **Zakynthos Regional Unit - Tourism Dept:** 26950-22.518

- **Zakynthos Municipal Office:** 26953-61.300-1

- **Police Station:** 26950-48.266, 26950-24.475

- **Tourist Police:** 26950-24.482-4
- **Traffic Police:** 26950-24.476

- **Hospital:** 26950-59.100

- **Port Authority:** 26950-28.117-8

- **Airport:** 26950-28.322, 26950-29.500

- **Zakynthos Ferry Association:** 26950-49.500, 26950-22.083

- **KTEL Long-distance buses:** 26950-22.255

- **Radio taxi service:** 26950-48.400

- **Post-Byzantine Museum:** 26950-42.714

- **Public Library:** 26950-48.128

- **Solomos, Kalvos & Eminent Zakynthians Museum:** 26950-48.982

- **Roma Mansion:** 26950-28.343
- **The Fort's archeological site:** 26950-48.099

- **Ecclesiastical Museum:** 26950-28.683

- **Askos Stone Forest:** 26950-31.650

- **"Vertzageio" Museum of Rural Life:** 26950-84.077

- **Chelmi Natural History Museum:** 26950-65.040

- **Milaneio Maritime Museum:** 26950-42.436

73. The church of Agios Dionysios, by the town's seafront avenue.





74. The Blue Caves are sea caves with a particular geological formation and rank high among Zante's natural attractions. The dominant colour is blue, hence their name.



75. The caretta - caretta turtle at the Laganas sea area.

• **Zakynthos National Marine Park** (www.nmp-zak.org): 26950 29870-2

Zante town website: www.zakynthion.gov.gr

Trips around Zante Island

North

Agios Nikolaos 2

This small port offers a shuttle boat service to Pesada, Kefalonia, and is lined with tavernas. Facing the port's entrance, there is Agios Nikolaos islet with monastic ruins on it. **Distance from the capital town:** 32 km NW.

Must see

- The **Blue Caves** on the NE tip of Cape Skinari, where the lighthouse stands. This is the location that is closest to Kefalonia Island. The best time for a visit is early in the morning when seawaters under the natural rock "arches" assume an intense blue colour.
- **Askos Stone Park** (www.askosstonepark.gr), 1 km S. Visit this natural park that is very rich in flora and fauna and is unique in Greece. It is home to 200,000 trees, plants, and shrubs belonging to 120 species and it is the habitat of

1,500 animals belonging to 45 species. Visitors can cross the park via an extensive traditional cobblestone path network.

- **Korithi** (2 km N), a village of well-tended stone houses.
- **Xygia** (7.5 km S), the site of an unexploited healing sulphur spring. To get there take a small boat from Agios Nikolaos port.

Activities

- Swimming at the village's beach, the Blue Caves and Makrys Gialos.
- Water frolics at the Waterpark.
- Tennis.
- Basketball.
- Water sports sessions, organised in hotel facilities.
- Sauna, hydromassage and thalassotherapy are some of the services provided in hotels in the area.
- Beach volleyball.
- Tour of the island on small boats leaving from Agios Nikolaos.

Volimes 3

It is a scenic mountain village that actually comprises three smaller hamlets: Ano Volimes, Kato Volimes and Meses Volimes. It is famous for the local colourful woven fabrics and embroidery crafted by the members of the village's Rural Cooperative. You can visit the Blue Caves from here. On your way to Volimes, visit the picturesque **Orthonies** village. **Distance from the capital:** 32.5 km NW.

Must see

- The belfry of **Agia Paraskevi's** church, a faithful replica of Agios Dionysios' belfry in Zante town.
- **Agios Andreas** monastery, NW of the village.
- The 1540 **Agios Georgios ton Krimnon** monastery in a dense pine forest (2.5 km W.). A path starting there leads to the cave where Agios Gerasimos, Kefalonia's patron saint, led an ascetic life.
- **Panagia Anafonitria** monastery (6 km SW), housing a 15th-century medieval tower.

- The beautiful, famous and much photographed "**Navagio**" beach (3.6 km W). Small boats will take you to this beach (a 30-minute trip) from the turquoise waters of Porto Vromi bay. The beach's real name is Agios Georgios but it got this name (*navagio*=shipwreck) because of the merchant vessel that was shipwrecked there in the 1980's. Make sure you bring some potable water along.
- **Elies** (6.5 km E), where you will see a number of traditional stone houses.
- The 16th-century **Panagia Spiliotissa** monastery (about 10 km SE, near Orthonies village). Its wood-carved iconostasis was crafted by Nikiforos Lampetis in 1712.

Activities

- Swimming at: Makrys Gialos and "Navagio".
- Rent a pedalo or other small boat and explore the sea caves in Porto Vromi area.
- Hiking along trails that lead to secluded coves such as Saricha cove.
- Enjoy yourselves at Agia Paraskevi feast, on July 26th; and Agios Dimitrios feast, on October 26th.

Mesi (Middle) Zante

Katastari 4

The island's most populated village is Katastari, built in an amphitheatre-like manner on a hill slope full of olive trees and vineyards, overlooking the touristic Alykes bay. Katastari has a long tradition in music and there is a Philharmonic Orchestra. **Distance from the capital:** 16.5 km NW.

Must see

- The panoramic view from the 17th-century **Agios Ioannis Prodomos** monastery.
- "**Vertzageio**" **Museum of Rural Life** at Pigadakia village (1.5 km S) where there are rare items on display (some dating back to the 16th century) related to the cultural and rural history of a traditional village in Zante.
- "**Chelmi Natural History Museum**", at Agia Marina village (7 km S). In this private museum there are collections of birds, fishes, shells from seas around the world, extinct plants and animals, minerals and ores. Printed educational material is available for children.

76. Exploring sea caves at Porto Vromi.



Alykes

5

It's a seaside village and a very popular tourist destination. A river runs nearby with a stone bridge over it. The village was named after the salt mines in the area. At a small distance, there are many small beaches and coves. **Distance from the capital:** 17.5 km NW.

Must see



- The seaside **Alikanas** village (3 km SE); a site of archeological finds.
- The **Venetian watchtower** (Vardiola) with a coat of arms ensconced in the wall near Agios Konstantinos, a small church (about 8 km SE).
- The picturesque **Planos** village (16 km S), a favourite tourist destination. At a short distance from Planos, visit the famous **Tsilivi beach** that is among the island's prettiest and most popular ones. This is where you will also find the "**Milaneio Nautical Museum**". Exhibits include nautical items from famous ships, photographic material, costumes and heritage articles of importance that complement an impressive 4,000-year-old record of history.

Activities

- Swimming: at the village's beach, and across the beachfront from Alikanas to Tsilivi, at Porto Vromi bay and "Navagio" (NW side of the island).
- Mini golf: There is an excellent mini golf course in the area.
- Camping: at Alykes, Meso Gerakari (6.5 km S) and Tragaki (8 km S).
- Panagia Anafonitria feast; join the celebrations if you happen to visit the area on August 15th.

Agios Leon

6

This is a traditional mountain village with stone houses and dry-stone courtyard walls. **Distance from Zante town:** 24 km W.

Must see



- **Agios Leon** church, built in memory of the late Bishop of Sicily. Rugs and textiles woven by locals are available for sale in the village.
- **Loucha** village (5 km NE) surrounded by a



lovely countryside.

- The stunning natural environment in **Limnionas bay** (5.5 km SW).
- **Kampi** (7 km NW), a village built at the foot of the steep Schiza rock offering a spectacular sunset view. There is a Mycenaean burial ground nearby with carved caves.
- **Koiliomenos** or Agios Nikolaos (7 km SE – elevation: 480 m.), a traditional 16th century village; visit the impressive Agios Nikolaos' church belfry (1893). On your way to Lagopodo across a green area you can visit the "Orchid Garden" containing 42 orchid species that grow on the island.
- **Machairado** (14 km SE), Zante's largest village, second to Katastari, with a traditional architectural style. There are noteworthy churches such as the 14th-century Agia Mavra church with a Venetian bell tower and the 14th-century Ypapanti's Church which was recently damaged by fire and restoration works are on the way. About 4 km E. of the village you can visit the **Koumoutos Estate** where top quality organic wine and olive oil are produced on the 60 hectares of land. (tel: 26950-92.284).

Activities

- Swimming at Limnionas and Porto Roxa.
- Hiking. Mount Vrachionas offers some pretty interesting walks: from Loucha village (4 km NW) to Koiliomenos through Yperagathos Monastery and towards Maries; from Gyri village (6.5 km NW) towards Agia Marina and from Exo Chora village (4.7 km N) to Kampi.

South

Argasi

7

Argasi lies at the foot of Mount Skopos and it is a busy and popular seaside resort. The village's popular beach features a 19th-century stone bridge and the ruins of a medieval castle. From June 1st to October 31st, after sunset, it is forbidden to camp or remain within the greater seaside area of Argasi's beach or anywhere around cosmopolitan **Vasilikos** resort (11 km S.), as lights and noise seriously disturb the egg-laying patterns of the sea turtles. **Distance from the capital:** 4 km. SE.



78. Beautiful sandy beaches on Marathonisi.

Activities

- The area is ideal for hiking. Follow the trail starting at Argasi and reach the mountaintop where Panagia Skopiotissa church stands, built on the site of the temple of Artemis. The view from the top is well worth the effort.
- In Argasi, there is a toyland and a small zoo.
- Swimming in Argasi at the beaches: Kaminia, Vourderi, Porto Zoro, Banana (where white lilies grow out of the sand), Ionio, Porto Roma and Gerakas.
- There are beaches with facilities for beach volleyball, tennis and water sports.
- Scuba diving at Vasilikos diving centre.

Laganas 8

It is the island's cosmopolitan top resort with bars, cafés, and restaurants. Part of the beach is subject to restrictions regarding the protection of the *Caretta-caretta* sea turtle as Laganas bay, the islets Marathonisi and Pelouzo and Strofades islets are within the "National Marine Park of Zakynthos". **Distance from the capital:** 11 km S.

Must see

- The pine-covered **Agios Sostis islet**, facing a pebble beach and the small port. A floating bridge connects it to Zakynthos.
- **Porto Koukla**, a cosmopolitan resort.
- **Kalamaki** (6 km E), a popular tourist area with a lovely beach and impressive gypsum cliffs (Gypsolithoi or Ypsolithoi).

Activities

- Basketball
- Beach volleyball
- Water sports
- Hydromassage
- Thalassotherapy
- Swimming at the sandy beach in Laganas, Agios Sostis and Porto Koukla.
- Scuba diving at the Laganas diving centre.
- Camping.

Keri 9

This is a picturesque village at the island's southern tip, with a beautifully paved square

and the ruins of a medieval community. In **Limni**, the harbour area of Keri, (5.5 km NE) there are many fish tavernas. This place is also the site of tar reserves known since antiquity (at "Pigi Irodotou"). **Distance from the capital:** 21 km SW.

Must see

- The 1745, Renaissance-style **Panagia Keriotissa** church, featuring a beautiful belfry and an outstanding wood-carved iconostasis.
- The **lighthouse in Keri**, built in 1925 (1.5 km SW), on the verge of a precipice dropping 200 m. From here, the sunset view is one of the most enjoyable in the Ionian Sea, as is the view to Megali Myzithra and Mikri Myzithra, two towering white cliffs jutting out of the sea in pyramid-like shapes.
- **Marathias** village (2.5 km S of Limni). It offers a fantastic view of Laganas bay and **Marathonisi** isle.
- **Damianos** cave, near Agalas village.

Activities

- Begin at Limni Keriou by taking the small boat that goes on a tour around the area's sea

caves. The boats pass by Mikri Myzithra and Megali Myzithra, Marathias' Kamares (natural openings into the rocks); and the sandy beach on Marathonisi.

- Swim at Limni and Marathias' beach.
- Scuba dive at the diving centre in Limni Keriou.

Nearby islands

Strofades 10

Far into the Ionian Sea, 45 km SW of Zante and 78 km W of Cape Katakolo, Peloponnese, two small secluded islands appear: Strofadia or Strofades. In antiquity they were called "Floating Islands" because they actually appear to be floating. Stamfani is the large one and Arpyia (Arpina) is the small one. The two are connected by a reef-like isthmus. The 13th-century **Metamorfofi Monastery** (or Panagia Pantochara Monastery) is on Arpyia. The walls are over 25 metres high, obviously to ward off pirate raids. This is the place where Agios Dionysios, Zante's patron saint, had retreated. Rent a boat from the port to get there. However, you won't be allowed to remain on either isle: both are part of the greater "National Marine Park of Zakynthos" zone.

79. Mikri Myzithra and Megali Myzithra, in Keri area.



Must see

- **Sekania** and **Dafni** beaches, two of the most significant habitats for the breeding ways of the loggerhead sea turtle.
- The **Folk Art Museum** ("Memorosa"), at Vasilikos; exhibits include collections of local costumes, handwoven fabrics, utensils, tools, furniture and photographic material depicting the island prior to the 1953 earthquake.
- Gorgeous **Gerakas** beach near Vasilikos with its flowery yards and tavernas where you will hear some traditional singing ("kantades").
- The privately-owned **Pelouzo** islet (at Laganas bay), a place that is a protected sea turtle breeding area.

80. Zante is endowed with beautiful scenery and rare geological phenomena.





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