

IONIAN & AEGEAN ISLAND HOLIDAYS



EXCLUSIVE HOLIDAYS TO THE GREEK ISLANDS

FURTHER INFORMATION BOOKLET

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We kindly ask that you leave the booklet at the property in a visible location, handy for the arriving guests to read and enjoy. If you have any queries regarding any of the information in the book or if there is anything else you would like to know, please do not hesitate to speak to your Representative.

WELCOME TO VILLA ASTRA



Ionian Island Holidays and the property owners would like to welcome you to Villa Astra, Fiskardo, Kefalonia. We trust that your journey to Kefalonia was a pleasant one and that everything is in order with the apartment. By now your Representative will have given to you your welcome letter which will include the place and time of the welcome meeting. We recommend that you take a few moments from your holiday to attend even if you are familiar with the island and your surroundings as at this time you will be given important information regarding your stay.

Please take time out to read this information booklet which has been put together with your holiday in mind and help you get the most from your stay in Kefalonia. If you have any queries regarding your holiday or if there is anything else you would like to know, please do not hesitate to speak to your Representative.

ABOUT IONIAN ISLAND HOLIDAYS

We are a small independent specialist tour operator offering exclusive holidays to Greece and the islands, our properties range from villas by the sea, villas with pools, waterside apartments, apartments with swimming pools, boutique hotels, deluxe spa hotels and family run pensions. We operate entirely in Greece & more specifically the Ionian Islands of Kefalonia, Ithaca, Lefkada, Meganisi, Paxos, Corfu and to the mainland Epiros

coastline. In the Aegean we feature Skopelos, Alonissos, Skiathos and the mainland Pelion Peninsula.

The quintessential Greek Islands; hot sun, warm sea, shaded olive groves, historic monuments, ancient vine terraces, dramatic cliffs, the hum of cicadas and perhaps, most important of all, that timeless quality, uniquely Greek that is 'Filoxenia' or Friendship to Visitors.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

As a specialist and totally independent tour operator, we have a simple philosophy - "To provide quality holidays to the Greek Islands, backed by solid experience and a high level of customer care" . Ionian Island Holidays are part of that heritage. We love our islands, and are determined that their beauty, culture and tradition should not be changed irreversibly by inappropriate

development. To this end, we have encouraged the sympathetic restoration of many of the old houses and villas and to fully support all initiatives that maintain this tradition.

It is equally important to us that the company should be very much a part of and contribute to the local economy to the benefit of all the islanders.

OUR SERVICE

We believe that people who book with Ionian Island Holidays will benefit from our experience, knowledge and the personal attention that we, as a small independent tour operator, can offer. When you contact our office in London, you will be speaking to an experienced and knowledgeable team who know the islands and the accommodation intimately.



Our home in Kefalonia

ABOUT VILLA ASTRA

CLEANING

Maid service is provided on Tuesday or Wednesday for cleaning and change of linen. If you wish to empty the rubbish yourself, you can always use the municipal bin on the main road and recycle bins in Fiskardo.

HOT WATER

The water is heated using the boiler. You will need to initiate it manually at the main electric switch board. Your representative will advise you where this can be found.

AIR CONDITIONING

The air conditioning is operated by remote control. The usual temperature is around 22°C. All doors and windows should be closed for air conditioning to function properly.

KEYS

The keys to your property can be found in the front door and instructions on where to leave them will be given in your departure letter. We would ask that you take good care of the keys to the property as if they are your own. In the unlikely event you were to lose the keys, please contact your representative and you will be provided with a spare set.

However, should it be necessary to change the locks for security reasons as a result of lost keys, we reserve the right to make a charge for which you may be liable for. We would ask that you also be mindful when you are outside the property and around the pool area not to lock yourselves out. This can happen easily as the wind can slam doors very quickly. Should you get locked out contact your Representative.



Please note that these extra keys are for use only in emergency - we cannot provide spare keys as a matter of course.

SWIMMING POOL

The pool is cleaned every other day.

WATER

The property's tap water is NOT drinkable.

INTERNET

Wifi connection is free of charge. Details of passwords will be given in your welcome letter.

FIRE NOTICE

Fire drill instructions can be found at the back of the front door.

CCTV

The outside areas of the villa are monitored by a CCTV.

LOST PROPERTY

Please ensure all personal possessions are packed when leaving your accommodation. Whilst we will endeavour to assist when items are left, unfortunately we are unable to guarantee the return of any items which

have been left unattended and will not be liable for any items lost or damaged. If we are able to locate your lost item, postage, packaging and handling fees may apply for the return of the lost items.



HEALTH & SAFETY

To help ensure that your holiday will be both happy and safe, we would kindly ask that you take the time to read the following information.

Part of the enjoyment of traveling abroad is experiencing a different way of life. Please remember though, that it may also mean experiencing different standards from those we are used to at home. We are continually working to raise safety standards in all of our properties and will of course do our best to ensure that your holiday is safe and trouble-free, but we do ask that you take extra care while you are away. With this in mind, we would like to highlight the following important points.

FIRE SAFETY

Other countries have different fire safety regulations and procedures. Please read carefully all safety information available in your property and in this information book. When you first arrive, please make sure you familiarise yourself with the location of the fire exits and the location of all fire extinguishers.

To help avoid the risk of fire, please take particular care when cooking and using the barbecue.

IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT OF A FIRE:

- RAISE THE ALARM
- CALL THE FIRE BRIGADE - 199
- DO NOT PANIC

Leave the building. Do not stop to take personal belongings with you

- IF THE EXITS/STAIRS ARE BLOCKED keep the doors shut and try to get out onto a balcony for fresh air and to attract attention
- DO NOT RE-ENTER THE BUILDING - AWAIT FOR CLEARANCE FROM THE FIRE BRIGADE

BATHROOMS

In common with many Mediterranean countries, your bathroom will probably have a marble or tiled floor. Shower curtains are not always provided and most bathrooms do not have non-slip mats in either the bath or shower, so extra care must be taken when the floor is wet, particularly with children.

Due to the size of the standard bore sewerage pipe used, Greek toilets cannot properly dispose of any paper or other waste material. To avoid blockages, please ensure that all paper, nappies and sanitary items are placed in the bin provided, which will be emptied regularly.

GLASS PANELS/DOORS

Although most properties have safety stickers on glass doors this may not always be the case, so particular care should be taken when walking through glass patio doors, as it can be difficult to tell if they are open or closed.

SECURITY AND VALUABLES

Where available, it is generally advisable to use the safety deposit facilities, or hotel safe, at your property, particularly for valuables.

WATER

Although tap water is purified it can cause upset stomachs and so it is best to drink bottled water, which may be purchased in local shops. To avoid dehydration and the effects of the sun it is advisable to drink water, in addition to other drinks you may consume.

PLUMBING

Drainage systems in Greece are not always efficient as small bore pipes are often used. A blockage will cause considerable inconvenience and during the summer season plumbers can be hard to find. To avoid problems of this nature, please do not put any products other than a small amount of toilet paper into the toilet. A bin is provided in the bathroom for disposable nappies and other sanitary products.

RUBBISH DISPOSAL

The maid will dispose of your rubbish on visits to the property. If you wish to dispose of rubbish in between visits, your Representative will advise you of the nearest disposal bin. Please keep the lid on the bin and tie any rubbish sacks up securely to stop any rodent/insect infestation.

GAS SAFETY

If your accommodation has a gas cooker, always double check that it has been turned off properly just as you would at home. Please follow any Gas Safety instructions provided. In many cases you will find that the gas is supplied direct from a bottle - as an extra precaution, turn the supply off at the bottleneck when it is not in use.

Never attempt to locate a gas leak yourself or tamper with the gas supply. If you are unsure about how any of the gas appliances operate or have any queries or concerns please ask your Representative for assistance and advice.

SMOKING MATERIALS

Please take care when discarding matches, cigarettes etc. Always use the ashtrays provided. Never throw a cigarette end carelessly within the grounds or outside, especially near trees and plants. In summer the vegetation can be tinder-dry and fires can start all too easily. Please note that it is absolutely prohibited to use any type of flammable materials inside the property.

KEYS

Please be careful when you are outside the property not to lock yourselves out. This can happen easily as the wind can slam doors very quickly! Should you get locked out keys are held by the maids and your Representative. Please note that these extra keys are for use only in emergency - we cannot provide spare keys as a matter of course.

SUNBATHING

A healthier colour makes us all feel better, but taking too much sun can be both painful and dangerous. Build up your tan gradually by minimising your exposure during the first few days of your holiday. Remember the sun's rays are at their strongest between the hours of 11.00 to 15.00.

- Always use a sunscreen that protects against UVA and UVB (ultra violet) and has a high SPF (sun protection factor)
- Avoid midday sun, but if you have to go out, cover up with loose clothing and wear a wide brimmed hat
- Never expose babies under six months to direct sunlight
- Remember you can still burn in the shade, when it's cloudy or when you're swimming.

Wind and water intensify the sun's effect, so while you may feel cool, you could be burning. Always re-apply sunscreen after swimming

- Where possible, seek natural shade

SWIMMING POOL SAFETY

You will find that many swimming pools are not designed in the same way as the UK and may have unusual features. Take care when walking around the pool, as pool surrounds are often slippery when wet. Do not use the pool if you cannot see the bottom and do not tamper with the pool filter covers, report any defects to your Representative immediately. In general, pools do not have a lifeguard so we strongly recommend that you read through this Swimming Pool Safety section.

NEVER put any liquids or chemicals into the pool yourself. The pool pump house housing the pump and filtration equipment should normally be locked and not accessible. However, if for some reason the pump house is open, perhaps for access to the “Pool Lights” switch, **NEVER** touch any of the equipment. Keep children out of the pump house at all times. If pool chemicals such as chlorine and acid are in the pump house, under no circumstances touch them and ask your Representative to have them removed to a safe place. Concentrated chlorine and acid will cause severe burns on contact with skin.

Please take a few minutes to read this information and familiarise yourself with the points mentioned below.

- Please note that the pool is unattended and therefore you are responsible for the safety of any children and non-swimmers in your party to act responsibly around the pool area.
- Diving is NOT permitted.
- If you are at a shared pool please consider others and be respectful of other swimmers.
- Please familiarise yourself on arrival with the depth of the pool. In particular the deep and shallow ends as well as the steepness of the slopes. Pay close attention to the depth markings.
- Shower before and after using the pool - this will help maintain good hygiene standards, keep the pool clean and functioning properly.
- Please do not swim in the pool after using suntan lotions or oils as this can damage the filter systems.
- It is your responsibility to ensure children in your party are supervised at all times when using the pool.
- Please do not run or allow children to run around the pool areas.
- Please remove all toys and swimming aids from the pool and the pool area when the pool is no longer in use and when an adult is not supervising the area.
- Please avoid using drinking glasses, bottles and anything breakable around the pool area.
- No alcohol should be consumed before or during the use of the swimming pool.
- Should the weather turn windy, please ensure any parasols are closed or where possible removed from the pool area. Please ensure they are also closed when not in use.
- Beware of slippery surfaces and raised edges in and around the pool.
- Do not tamper with the pool filter covers, pool lights or any pool equipment at all times when using the pool and the surrounding areas.

DRIVING

Driving overseas can be great fun and a good way to explore. However, conditions and procedures can differ to those we are familiar with in the UK. The rules of the road can be very different, drivers are not always obliged to stop at pedestrian crossings and you may need to look the other way when crossing the road! Please be fully aware of the local regulations regarding the "Highway Code". Information on speed limits can be obtained from the car hire company.

Never drink and drive, as it is an offence



GREEN LIVING

We at Ionian Island Holidays take an active role in assuring that we do our utmost to be energy aware and we do all we can to aid conservation to help the environment. We know many of our guests want to conserve energy and water, so here are a few tips to help you during your stay

WATER CONSERVATION

- 🍃 Turn taps off when brushing your teeth or shaving
- 🍃 Take shorter showers: recommended time 4 mins
- 🍃 Fully load the washing machine/ dishwasher OR, if not full, use the half load button if available
- 🍃 Use lower economy settings on washing machines and dishwashers
- 🍃 Do not leave taps running unnecessarily



ENERGY CONSERVATION

- 🍃 Switch off lights when not in use
- 🍃 Kettles use lots of electricity - so only boil what you need and don't overfill
- 🍃 Don't leave TVs/DVD-players/Radios on standby - this still uses a lot of electricity
- 🍃 Don't leave your mobile phone or other device charger plugged into the socket when not charging, as this still draws on electricity
- 🍃 If it's not too hot, instead of using the air-conditioning, open doors and windows and let the cool summer breezes in
- 🍃 To maximise air-conditioning, ensure external doors and windows are shut (air-conditioning in some properties will not work otherwise)
- 🍃 Optimum air-conditioning temperature is 22-24°, helping conserve energy and preventing units from potentially freezing up and causing water leakage (Remember, it's not recommended to sleep with air-conditioning as you may catch a chill)
- 🍃 If the hot water switch is on, make sure it is turned off when not needed

EXPLORING FISKARDO

Northern Kefalonia remains almost completely untainted by tourism and happily for us strict planning laws prevent the picturesque towns of Fiskardo and Assos from being overdeveloped. The majority of the hustle and bustle in Fiskardo comes from the vast array of boats that stream in and out of the harbour throughout the season. With a combination of sailing flotillas, daily ferries and some of the finest quality yachts in Europe the people-watching potential is endless and many an hour can be spent in the harbour-front tavernas watching the world go by.



Early morning by the harbour of Fiskardo

Fiskardo sits on a bed of limestone that buffered it against the earthquake of 1953 which virtually destroyed the island. It was only the northern part of Kefalonia that survived the devastating quake and as such Fiskardo boasts the island's only remaining example

of the attractive Venetian architecture of Kefalonia's past. Two lighthouses, Victorian and Venetian, guard the bay and the ruins to be found on the headland are believed to be from an ancient chapel begun by the Norman invader Robert Giscard, after whom Fiskardo is named.



View of Fiskardo

You can hire motorboats here and explore most of the Ithaca Channel - even go across to Ithaca if you want. There are diving courses and a marine adventure trip as well as cruises around the islands. The boats leave every morning and stop at various beaches and harbours on the way, - some even go to the big sea caves on Meganisi, which are said to have been used to hide submarines during the war. If you're into walking, there is a series of trails and tracks to follow. You could even buy a rod and line and catch your supper off the rocks around the harbour! There is a daily ferry to Lefkada and Ithaca.



LOCAL AMENITIES

Fiskardo has all of the amenities you will need for your stay, with a wide range of excellent tavernas and restaurants, ATMs, post office, bakery and excellent range of shops.

SHOPS

You will find plenty of clothing, jewellery and souvenir shops at the harbour of Fiskardo - at a 5 minute drive from the villa. During the summer season shops are open from 9.00am until late.

BANK

There is no bank in Fiskardo. The nearest bank can be found in Argostoli, open Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 2.00pm. However, there is an ATM in Fiskardo and money exchange facilities can be found at Pama Travel.

MINI MARKET

There are several mini markets and larger well-stocked supermarkets nearby. The closest and most convenient in terms of parking can be found in the village of Manganos, where there is a very well-stocked mini market and directly opposite a large fruit and vegetable shop. Another well-stocked mini market can be found in the village of Konidarata. In addition, there are 3 main supermarkets in Fiskardo. One is located in the main square, which also has a meat counter. There is one in the alley way next to Irida restaurant, which also has a fresh fish and meat counter. Finally, there is a smaller one next to Captain Cabin's on the harbour front.

As Fiskardo is pedestrianised you must consider carrying your shopping back to your car - in some cases the supermarkets will help you with that.

PHARMACY

The nearest pharmacy is located in the New Square just off the harbour front in Fiskardo. Open 7 days a week from 9.00am to 2.00pm and 6.00pm to 9.00pm. Closed Wednesday afternoon.

DOCTOR

There is a private medical centre located above the main supermarket (Tofolos) along the harbour front. The practice is open Mon-Fri 9.00am to 1.00pm and 6.00pm to 8.00pm - Sat 9.00am to 2.00pm - Sun by appointment.

DENTIST

The nearest Dentist is located in Argostoli and is open Mon-Fri 9.00am to 2.00pm and 6.00pm to 8.00pm. For more information please contact your Representative.

BAKERY

The closest bakery is in Fiskardo Harbour, however bread can be found at the mini market in Manganos. Bakeries are usually open from 7.30am to 9.30pm.

RESTAURANTS

The closest restaurants to your villa are located in Manganos. For a wider choice visit Fiskardo Harbour where you can find restaurants ranging from traditional Greek tavernas to Italian, Thai and other European cuisines.

BEACHES

Foki bay and Alaties/Agia Jerusalem are your closest beaches - both at a 5 minute drive.

POST OFFICE

You will find the post office in Fiskardo Harbour, open from 12.00pm to 2.00pm, Monday to Friday.

PETROL STATION

There is a petrol station at a 15 minute drive from your property, on the left hand side on the main road towards Argostoli - in the village of Konidarata. The station is called EKO and it's open 7 days a week 8.00am to 9.00pm.

EXPLORING KEFALONIA

Kefalonia has some of the most spectacular scenery in the region, such as the Ionian's highest peak, Mt Ainos with its famous fir forests, standing guard over sandy beaches of the south, spectacular caves in the east, magnificent sea cliffs in the west and the gentler beauty of the Lixouri and Erisos Peninsula in the north. Combine all this with the Kefalonian people themselves - individual, genuinely friendly, possessing a marvellous sense of humour and it is easy to understand why so many visitors return year after year.

There is something for everyone on this island. For the archaeological amateur detective there is recent evidence (though whisper this softly if you visit its smaller neighbour) that the island of

Homer's epic called Ithaka is in fact Kefalonia! There's even an acropolis that predates its more famous counterpart in Athens. Venetian fortresses, British designed roads and bridges, certainly the island has a cosmopolitan history, much of which can still be seen today. History aside, perhaps Kefalonia's greatest asset lies in its diversity. For a family day out on a blue flag beach with all the conventional amenities, Lassi near the island capital Argostoli would be hard to beat. Perhaps the choice might be a secluded beach where ancient olive trees provide shade for a quiet read (or siesta!) with the blue waters of the Ithaka Channel at ones feet, then Foki Bay near Fiskardo will appeal.

Legend has it that Kefalonia is named after Kefalos, son of Hermes, one of the twelve gods of the Olympic Pantheon. With a father renowned for bringing a stroke of luck, we believe that this island fully lives up to its mythological associations and reflects the nature of your magnificent stay here.



Many sailing boats moor to the dock in Fiskardo

You can also explore by car the unspoilt mountain villages of the interior, the fertile valley vineyards such as Robola or the high forests of Mt Ainos, then walk the incredible mule track from Assos that climbs the mountain behind.

Maybe just stay at home, on balcony or terrace, contemplating the view, thinking about a swim in the pool or whether to eat in at your barbecue or out at a waterside tavern. Kefalonia is the home of Ionian Island Holidays, so we might be just a little biased, but we are glad to be sharing it with you!

ARGOSTOLI

Capital of the island since the 18th century, Argostoli today is a cosmopolitan blend of boutiques, coffee bars, jewellers and fine restaurants.



Originally built as a safe haven out of sight of potential invaders in 1757, the town became the capital due to its advantageous location. The changes the town has seen over the years have been immense, yet the style and design of the building and monuments today reveal little of the capital's past. Rebuilding Argostoli after the tragic earthquake of 1953 was a rather hurried process after this catastrophic crisis wiped out the entire town and the buildings standing today reveal none of the town's original Venetian splendour. What Argostoli does boast however, is the style and elegance of a modern European city in microcosm, which is unique to the island and can be found nowhere else in the Ionian.

The town is a hive of activity all year round, but particularly in July and August

when it attracts a multitude of tourists. Along a palm tree lined coastal road, fishermen can be found selling their morning's catch at the fresh fish market which is visited by all of the local taverna owners to buy their produce. For fresh homegrown produce there is also an impressive fruit and vegetable market which is open every day in peak season.

The main square is lively and full of a range of tavernas and bars. Many relaxing hours can be spent absorbing the hustle and bustle in and around this 'platia', or alternatively the shops range from leather goods and local ceramics to handmade crafts such as lace, crochet work and the characteristic Greek 'kourelia' rugs in varying colours and designs. Other points of interest include the archaeological and folklore museums, which are well worth a visit, not to mention the numerous silver and gold boutiques for which the island is famed!

LASSI

The largest tourist resort on the island, Lassi is located only ten minutes south of Argostoli and boasts an attractive stretch of sandy beaches and range of restaurants. This is the busiest area of the island and as such is probably one of the least charismatic, although it is excellent for watersports, such as ringos, waterskiing and pedaloes. Bathing is safe with a lifeguard service on most of the main beaches.

This coast is also famous for a remarkable escape story from World War II. An allied submarine was on patrol in the area and sunk. It came to rest on the bottom of the sea over 100 metres down. All of the crew drowned, except one man who managed to survive, swimming to the

surface. The whole island was swarming with Germans, but the local people hid him and eventually helped him to

escape. Of course Hollywood is now making a film about it.

LOURDAS

The village of Lourdass is largely undiscovered although in recent years some of the larger tour operators have begun to pick up on the appeal of this charming resort. With a long stretch of sandy beach and a small selection of waterfront tavernas this attractive resort is an ideal day out for beach lovers. The village is fairly isolated and boasts an attractive mountain backdrop which makes an ideal spot for some pretty sunsets.



The beautiful beach by the village of Lourdass

SKALA

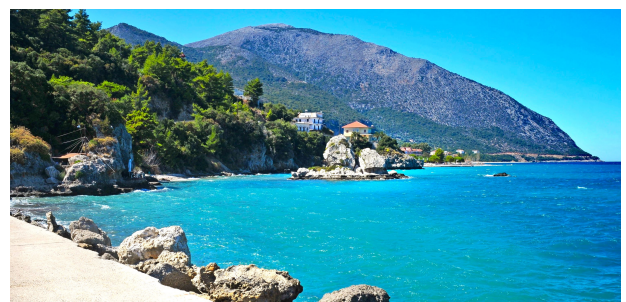
A scenic but busy resort located on the Southern coast of the island, Skala is a blend of old and new - in fact quite literally, as the 'old village' of Skala, destroyed by the earthquake, is located directly behind the new village and resort. Although much of the old town was destroyed in 1953 by the quake, it is still worth a stroll through the remains, which reveal a wealth of history of the area, with the old wash house and spring, bell tower graveyard and olive press. The resort has a very popular sandy

beach which is particularly good for water sports, but not good for those wishing to escape the crowds. Further along the beach a breeding sanctuary for the endangered sea turtles native to the area can be found.

A selection of around 20 tavernas and restaurants in the new village make the resort a good choice for an alternative evening out. Just outside Skala, on the coastal route towards Poros, you will find the ancient temple dedicated to Apollo, which dates back to the 7th century BC and the pretty church of Saint George rebuilt from the pre-classical building.

POROS

Poros is an attractive harbour town on the south east coast of the island, which like some of the other southern based towns of the island has become slightly more crowded in recent years due to the increase in tourism.



The port city of Poros

With a good choice of waterfront tavernas and restaurants, Poros gives access to Killini on the mainland by ferry, also to the island of Lefkada and is a

good stop off point when traveling around Kefalonia. The shingle beach is fairly small and can get crowded in peak

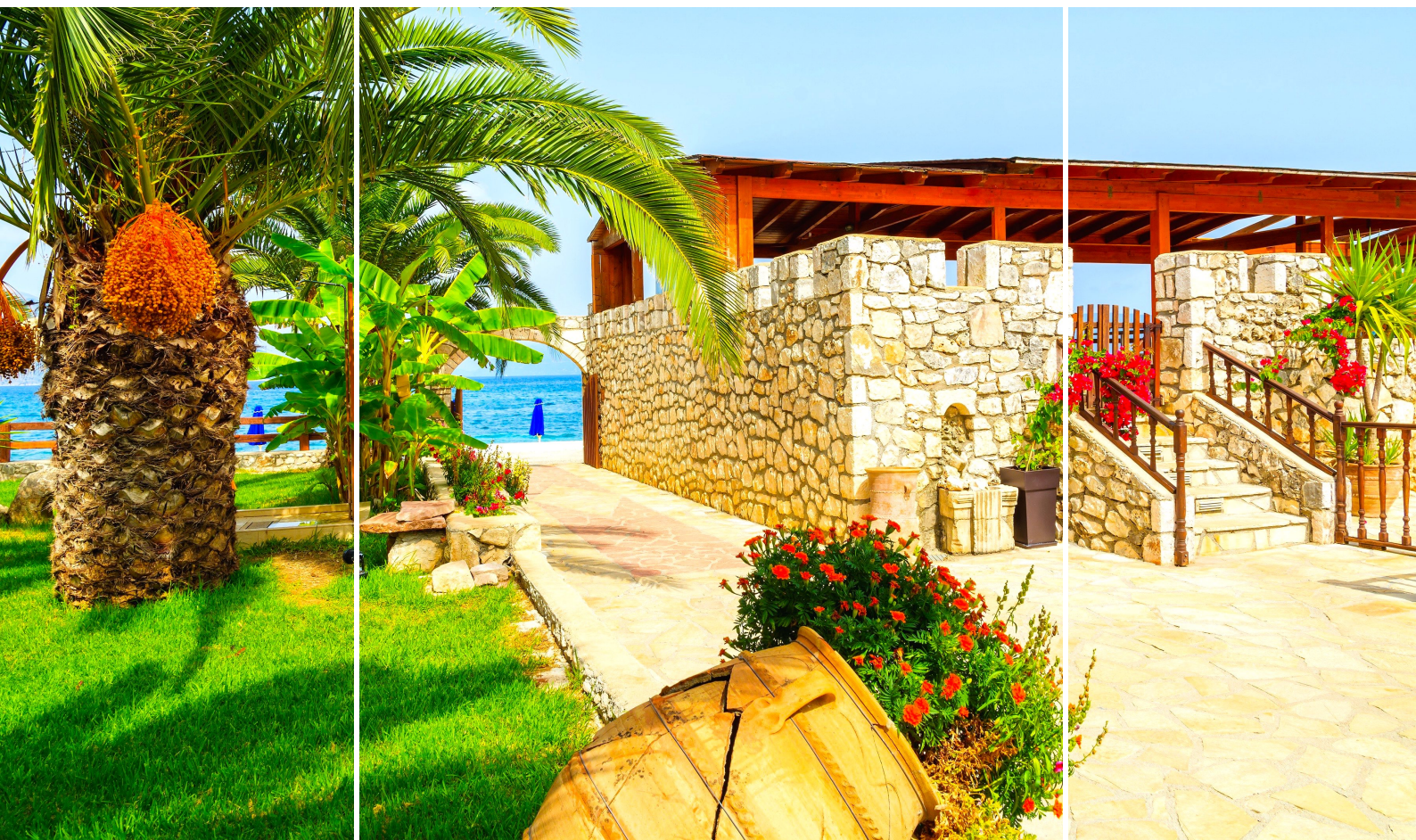
SAMI

Sami is a major port with regular ferries to Ithaka, Patras, Astons and also summer departures to Italy. The town is a popular but low key holiday resort. Shingle beaches are also the more secluded option of the picturesque Antisamos Beach, located just over a mile eastwards up a pretty mountain road.

Like the majority of settlements on the island, Sami was destroyed in the earthquake of 1953 and as such does not portray much of the traditional style architecture of the island, although there are plenty of pleasant waterside tavernas and bars to choose from. In spite of the town's modern appearance, Sami played a highly significant role in the island's history. The town is arguably the most important of the four ancient

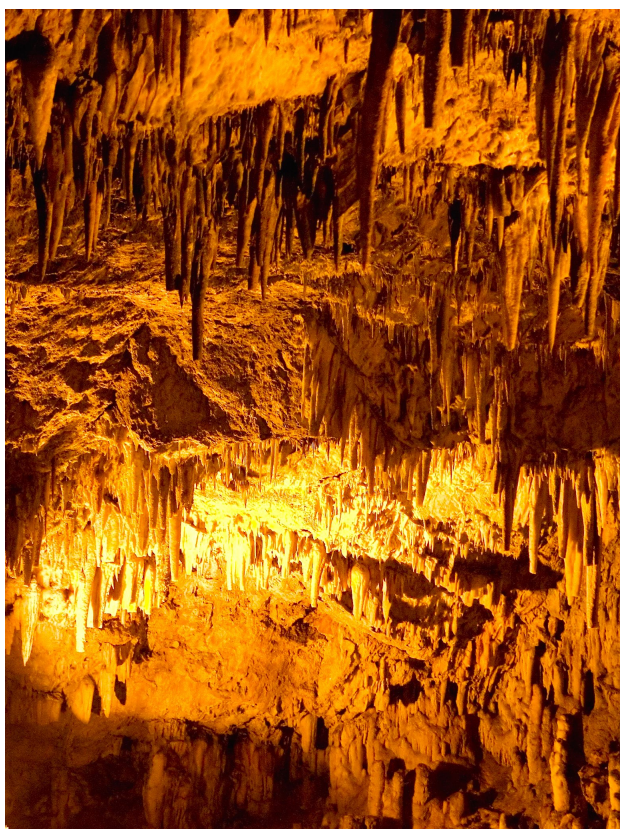
cities of the island and was inhabited at least until Roman times. As a city state it minted its own coins, which highlights its significance and size during that period. Sami is mentioned by Homer as a participant in the Trojan wars and also as the place of origin of many of Penelope's suitors. In 187 BC during the Roman invasion, the inhabitants of Sami retired to their fortifications and put up a fierce resistance until they were eventually overcome.

Although little of the town's turbulent history remains, visitors can still view the old ruins of Agios Fanentes Monastery on the hilltop enjoying stunning views of Sami Town. The monastery contains stones of the ancient acropolis of Kyathis and is well worth a visit.



DROGARATI CAVE

Drogarati Cave is an understandably popular tourist attraction on the island and definitely worth a visit if this is your first time to Kefalonia. The underground cave has been formed over the course of 150 million years, although it was only actually discovered last century. The formations of the stalactite and stalagmites are illuminated so that visitors can view their fascinating range of colour and shape. The acoustics inside the cave are spectacular and since 1963 the cave has been developed with interior lighting so that a number of concerts can be held there during the year for audiences of up to 500 - Maria Callas is even said to have sung in the cave! This area of Kefalonia is riddled with cave and the resistance fighters in the war used many of them to hide in.



The Drogarati cave stalactites

Drogarati cave is 144ft below ground level and the diameter ranges from 100ft to 120ft. Tourists can enter the cave for a small fee and view inside. The tour is unguided and the cave is slightly damp under foot so suitable footwear is advisable - it is not recommended for those with walking difficulties.

MELISSANI LAKE

Just two kilometres North of Sami is the village of Karavomylos, where you can find the stunning underground lake beneath the Melissa Caves. Again, as a first time visitor to the island it is worth seeing, the lake is situated in the heart of the caves and due to a collapsed roof directly above, is one of the most visited sights of the island. The water actually comes from the sea at Cape St Theodoron near Argostoli on the other side of the island. If you go to the main platia in Karavomilos, there's another small lake beside the sea with a water wheel and a good taverna. Karavomilos means Boatmill in Greek. There's a good shop for postcards, ice creams etc. To enter the cave, twenty steps lead down from the entrance to a landing platform where boats can be taken on a small guided tour inside which is certainly worth taking. The tour lasts ten minutes - a small fee is charged throughout the summer.



The stunning Melissani lake

AGIA EFIMIA

The pretty port of Agia Efimia is located on the east coast. This town was one of the island's most important trading places before the earthquake of 1953, but nowadays is one of the main summer bases for flotilla yachts. Only thirty-five minutes drive from Fiskardo, the town has a small selection of shops and waterside tavernas and a narrow stretch of shingle beach and boasts wonderful views out across the Ithaka channel.



The port of Agia Efimia

MYRTOS BEACH

The journey between Argostoli and Fiskardo is the most spectacular ride as the road rises into the Evmorfia foothills and beyond Agnonas, clinging to sheer cliffs as it heads for Dhivarata which is the stop for Myrtos Beach. This is the most dramatic beach in the Ionian islands and has not only been voted by the Sunday Times as one of the top 5 beaches in the Mediterranean, but is now also famed as the setting for the Hollywood epic Captain Corelli's Mandolin.

With its combination of pure white sand and pebbles and amazingly clear waters, the beach is a stunning picture postcard sight from the mountain

roadside above. In peak season Myrtos gets fairly busy and has very few shaded areas so it is worth taking an umbrella or visiting later in the afternoon to escape the glare of the midday sun. There is one beach taverna and in peak season sunbeds can be rented. Weaker swimmers and children should take extra care, as the beach shelves very steeply and the current is deceptively strong, although there is a lifeguard patrol.



Panoramic view of the majestic Myrtos beach

Straight out of Hollywood, Myrtos beach has been voted as the best Greek beach more than 10 times.

ASSOS

The atmospheric village of Assos is a haven of peace and tranquility, positioned on the small isthmus between the island and a huge hill crowned by a ruined Venetian fortress.



The beautiful village of Assos

The history of this area is rich, and the fortress dates back to 1590, once protecting sixty public buildings and 200 private houses from the threat of pirates. The old prison, inside the castle has just been restored. When the British ruled the island in 19th century, the Greeks revolted, so the British to regain control, imprisoned the main offenders in the fortress. Unfortunately these same men were the local farmers and the soldiers began to run out of food. The prisoners came up with a clever scheme. They suggested that they should be allowed out during the day to work in their fields and return in the evening back to their cells. The soldiers got their food and wine, the farmers for their money and everyone was happy with the arrangement! It was used for this purpose until 1953 when the earthquake struck the island.

One of the first ruins to see when entering through the top gate is the Catholic Church of St Marcos built originally around 1604. There are other ruins still around; including that of the Governor's house - part of the inside is still used by

local farmers but the public are excluded. From the upper gate follow the track as it winds down through the interior of the castle to reach the lower gate. From here you will find a footpath which descends gently around the hillside and there is a point where it closes with the upward track and is easy to cross over, if preferred.

Fortunately in spite of its unique natural beauty, Assos has remained relatively undiscovered and untouched by the main influx of tourism to the island. A handful tavernas can be found in the village with a small selection of shops and a mini-market for everyday needs. There is a short stretch of shingle beach with good swimming in the harbour and caves to explore at the other side of the bay.



View of the beach in Assos

TOP BEACHES

MYRTOS BEACH

Straight out of Hollywood, Myrtos beach has been voted as the the best Greek beach more than 10 times!



Greece's best beach - Myrtos

ALATIES/AGIA JERUSALEM

Beaches to visit are Alaties ("Salt pans") and nearby Agios Jerusalem (St Jerusalem). Alaties is a unique cove which takes its name from the small salt pools that gather along the beach - which is actually still collected by locals today and used for cooking. The beach is famed in the area and in past years was frequented by locals who would visit the beach for its medicinal qualities. Local people would sit in the pools of hot water that



During a winter day in Alaties

had gathered on the beach, to relieve various ailments such as rheumatism and arthritis - or simply to enjoy a hot bath! The beach has one taverna open throughout the season.

ANTISAMOS

Famous after starring on the silver screen in 2000 - 'Captain Corelli's Mandolin' - Antisamos beach is not far from Sami port and less than 20 miles away from the island's capital, Argostoli. This beautiful, and nowadays popular, beach boasts



Antisamos beach

about its crystal-blue, turquoise waters and the green hills surrounding the seashore. You can access the beach from the coastal road in Sami.

EMBLISSI BEACH

Emblissi Beach is a short ride or a ten minute walk around one and a half kilometres north of Fiskardo. The beach is a small shingle bay and although popular for visits to the north of the island, remains unspoilt and fairly quiet even at peak season times.

DAFNOUDI BEACH

Dafnoudi beach is now a dense wooded headland that overlooks the north end of the Ithaka channel. During World War II the Axis forces constructed a series of huge gun emplacements here (much like the those in the Guns of Navarone) along with a complex of tunnels for storing ammunition etc. The local inhabitants were forced to do most of the building work. The mesmerising beach of Dafnoudi is a secluded beautiful, lush beach only a mile away from the village of Fiskardo.



The mesmerising Dafnoudi beach

AMMES BEACH

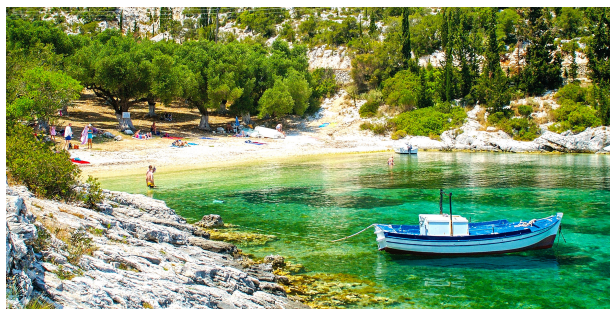
Six miles from Argostoli, the beautiful Ammes beach is a perfect spot to watch the sunset. With its gorgeous shallow clear waters and dark golden sand, it is a safe beach making it ideal for families.



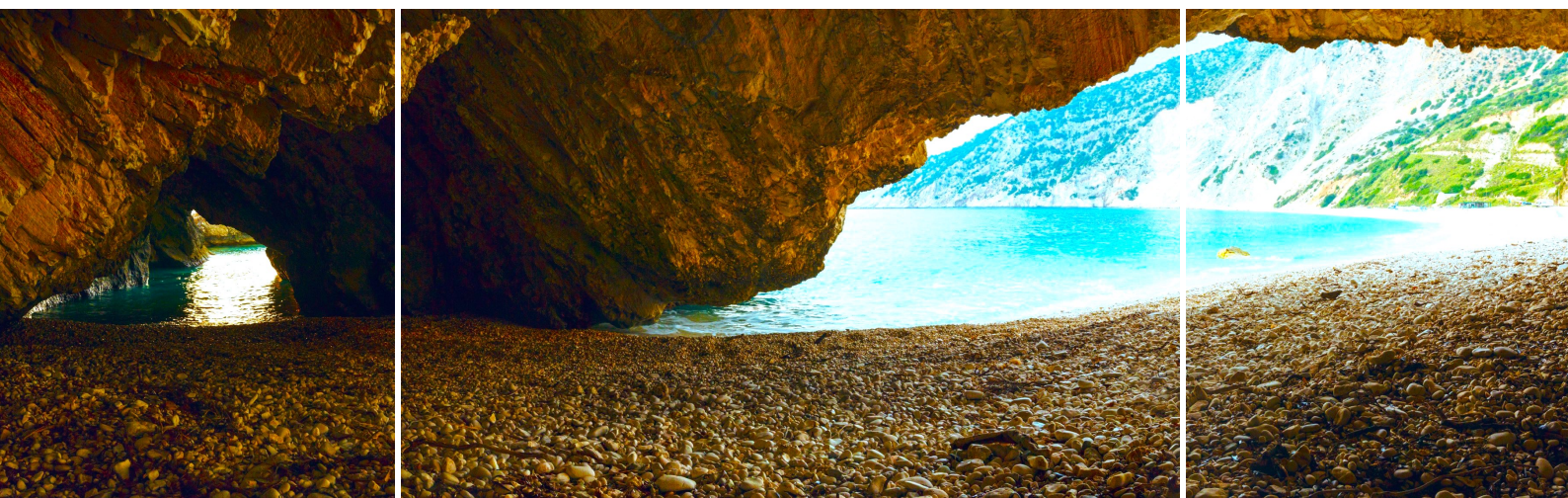
Clear blue water at Ammes beach

FOKI BAY

Foki is ten minutes South of Fiskardo and is a small shingle bay directly below the main road into the town. Foki is sheltered from the road and as such is secluded enough not to be overlooked in any way, although the crystal clear waters can be seen from the roadside and add to the picturesque ride into Fiskardo.



The secluded Foki Bay



TOP PLACES TO VISIT

MONASTERY OF AGIOS GERASIMOS

The protector of the island, Saint Gerasimos, was born in 1503 and spent a big part of his life in Jerusalem, Crete and Zakynthos before arriving to Kefalonia where he eventually died on the 15th August, 1579. In 1560, Saint Gerasimos founded what he called the 'New Jerusalem' - a nunnery in central Kefalonia. The monastery is a striking construction that has been re-built together with a church. Saint Gerasimos lived in a cave beneath the monastery, which is still accessible today.

The monastery is a five minute drive - or twenty minute walk - from Valsamata, a village of less than a thousand residents in central Kefalonia.



The monastery of Agios Gerasimos

ROBOLA WINERY - OMALA

In 1982, the experienced winemakers of Robola, established the Robola Cooperative of Kefalonia in an effort to promote the calibre and potential of the Kefalonian vineyards and to ensure a steady income for themselves. A year later, the first grape concentration was bottled and brought into the market, marking Robola's first move to commercialisation. Today, the Cooperative is 300-strong and with its own winery factory is now based in the community of Omala, right next to the Monastery of Agios Gerasimos.



The Robola winery, next to the monastery

SAINT GEORGE'S CASTLE - KASTRO

Built not far from the sea in 1500's by the Venetians, the castle was used as a means to command trade routes. A few years later, the fort fell into the hands of the Byzantines, the Franks and the Turks before the Venetians reclaimed it with the help of the Spanish and the Kefalonians.

The people of Kefalonia were impressed by the Venetians' level of craftsmanship and preferred to be ruled by them rather than the Turks. Visitors enjoy the wonderful panoramic view from the castle's bastions. The castle is open usually from 9.00 to 18.30 with a small entrance fee.



Agios Georgios castle

VENETIAN FORTRESS - ASSOSS

Located 20 miles from Argostoli, on the North-West coast of Kefalonia, the Venetian Fortress is one of the largest castles in Greece.

As Saint George's castle did not suffice the island's defence, the construction of the fortress began in 1593. The Venetian Senate's plan was to found a city within the fortress, transferring the island's administration away from Saint George's castle. Kastrini people were the last recorded inhabitants of the castle - in the late 1960's - living off grapes and olives.

Today, visitors see the debris of the prison yard and prison cells, with the site being open daily at no charge.



The entrance of the Venetian Fortress

DROGARATI CAVES & MELISSANI LAKE

Kefalonia has an impressive underground water network with subterranean lakes and caverns. Formed over the course of millions of years, Drogarati Caves are an understandably popular tourist attraction on the island. The cave's stalagmites and stalactites are illuminated and visitors enjoy a captivating view full of colours and shapes.

The stunning underground lake beneath the Melissa Caves, four miles from Sami, is another 'blockbuster' tourist attraction.

The sunlight together with the stalactites create beautiful colour combinations not to be missed, especially if it's your first time on the island.



Stunning view of the lake

MOUNT AINOS

The tallest mountain in the Ionian, at five thousand feet, is a national park covered in its unique Greek fir tree, the abies chephalonica. There are plenty of caves that have been thoroughly explored by speleologists over the years, with more than three thousand people living on the slopes of Mount Ainos.

LOCAL FOOD

The island of Kefalonia promises to offer a rich gastronomic experience with dishes made of fresh ingredients and home made pastries. Throughout the island you will find a plethora of luxurious Greek restaurants, traditional tavernas and plenty of diverse eateries offering quality international cuisine.

FETA CHEESE

Made of sheep's and goat's milk and produced in blocks, feta is the most popular Greek cheese used in lots of Greek dishes, salads and even pastries. High quality feta should have the aroma of ewe's milk, yoghurt and butter, together with a smooth and thick texture.



A refreshing block of Feta

KEFALONIAN PIES

The Kefalonian pie is the trademark delicacy of the island. Homemade crust, filled with rice, meat or spinach.



The trademark Spinach Pie

ALIADA

If you enjoy octopus, then Aliada could be just the perfect dish for you. Aliada is a delicious boiled octopus dish put together with garlic and mashed potatoes.



The very fine Aliada dish

GALAKTOBOUREKO

For the majority of Greeks, Galaktoboureko is the tastiest sweet in the country. Made of home made pastry and custard filling with eggs, milk and sugar, Galaktoboureko resembles the French mille-feuille. Unlike the French delicacy though, in this instance, the custard is baked with the pastry.



A delicious Greek version of the French mille-feuille

MANDOLES

Mandoles is a sweet snack famous in the Ionian, made of almonds and sugar. Inspired by the famous Italian nougat, you can buy Mandoles either buy the kilo or packed.



The greek nougat, known as Mandoles or Mandolato

warm Bougatsa. In most bakeries you will be offered the savoury version of the pastry as well. You can find the Bougatsa where in place of custard, the pie will be filled with cheese or minced meat.



The sweet and creamy Bougatsa

PASTELI

Pasteli is a sesame seed candy, made of local honey. You will find Pasteli in a flat bar, just like a chocolate bar. Pasteli is another perfect, sweet snack.



Fresh Pasteli

BOUGATSA

Bougatsa is the country's most popular breakfast pastry, made of homemade custard between layers of filo pastry. In every bakery on the island you will find a

ROBOLA WINE

The Greek wine grape variety grown in Kefalonia is known for its dry taste and its hint of lemon. Robola is the perfect white wine to complement your summer holidays, especially during those hot Greek days.



The refreshing and fragrant Robola wine

GREEK ANIMAL WELFARE

We at Ionian Island Holidays are passionate about Greece and its inhabitants, which includes all the local animals as well as the indigenous wildlife. Since Greece are not as fortunate as we are in the UK to have such fantastic charitable organisations and infrastructure such as the RSPCA, The Dogs Trust, Battersea Dogs Home and all the other wonderful animal charities that prevent us from seeing strays on our streets.

HOW IT WORKS

Your local Representative will place an animal welfare charity envelope inside your welcome letters and we kindly ask if you would kindly like to donate any of your left over change before you depart on your journey home in order to help the animals on the island or in the area where you have stayed.



For more information visit <http://www.kefalonias-animal-trust.org> or email mail@ionianislandholidays.com

The money raised will help local animal charities to purchase vaccinations, microchipping neutering and paying vets bills, feeding, fostering and rehoming.

Your donations will save the many lives of dogs, cats even donkeys, mules and horses and as all our chosen charities are run by volunteers all the donations go directly to helping the animals.

We thought you might like to read a story about how your donations helped Sasha a pure bred German Shepherd who was found wandering the streets of Corfu. She was in very poor condition, extremely weak from hunger in fact so weak she could barely walk. Sasha was ridden with fleas, ticks and suffering from a severe case of Mange.

CARE (Corfu Animal Rescue Establishment) were alerted and they immediately took Sasha to the local vets where she was placed on medication for all the ailments she was suffering from.

Sasha was in such poor condition that it was felt she would be best looked after by one of the volunteers from CARE who took her in and fostered her. Sasha was very well looked after and received the specialist attention and care she needed to recover.

Now some months later, Sasha has made a remarkable recovery. A bounding lively girl, Sasha is 10kgs heavier and full of energy, exhibiting all the characteristics one would expect to see from this fascinating breed. The kind volunteers from CARE have found Sasha a loving permanent home in Corfu.

Your donation has had a direct impact on this dog's life - in fact the money donated actually saved her life.

This is just one story how your donation will help make happy endings!

From all of us at Ionian Island Holidays and on behalf of the many volunteers of the charities we would like to say Thank You!

RESPONSIBLE & SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Ionian Island Holidays is committed to high standards of service and believes in regular and thorough training of employees. We continually seek to review and improve our holidays. We listen to our customers and always welcome suggestions for improving standards.

OUR INVOLVEMENT IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

We are committed to the conservation and preservation of the natural environment. With strong local connections, we feel we have a moral responsibility towards the environment and the local community.

SUPPORT FOR THE ECONOMY OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

We support small scale agriculture and local crafts of the local community, introducing you to the products and services available locally, from traditional wine and olive oil procedures to honey farmers.

PROVIDING PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR LOCAL INITIATIVES

We support and sponsor initiatives that seek to maintain the natural beauty of our region, including regular beach cleaning, footpath clearance and management of the wildlife.

INCREASING CLIENT AWARENESS AND INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL ISSUES

You may only have a short time to spend in this region, but we realise that this has an important part to play in ensuring that the qualities that attracted you to the area in the first place are preserved.

WORKING CLOSELY WITH OWNERS AND LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES

We encourage appropriate future development and share a mutual responsibility towards maintaining the natural beauty of our surroundings and to ensure appropriate future development.



YOUR NEXT TRIP WITH US...

When the Gods chose Greece for their home they knew what they were looking for...

- A land so beautiful time has almost stood still
- A sea so blue it shimmers against cloudless skies
- Endless hot summer days drifting into starlit nights
- Hundreds of tiny islands each unique with its own proud history and culture
- Spectacular secluded beaches stretching as far as the eye can see
- Never ending olive groves whistling in the wind
- A land with endless possibilities and choices

Ionian Island Holidays feature some of the most beautiful areas this glorious country has to offer and we are certain that you will become as captivated and passionate about Greece as we are!

LOYALTY DISCOUNT

EXCEPTIONAL SAVING WITHOUT COMPROMISING ON QUALITY

Ionian Island Holidays love to reward our loyal clients. To show our appreciation to returning guests, we offer an additional **5% loyalty discount** off any holiday with Ionian Island Holidays.

Should you book two holidays with us in the same season at full brochure price, we will reduce the cost of your second holiday by **15%**.

YOUR NEXT DESTINATION



ITHAKA

An island of hidden coves, green mountains and secret valleys where reality is as inspiring as the legend. Our properties are located in the south around the bustling main harbour Vathy and in the timeless small fishing harbour, Kioni in the north.



LEFKADA

Known as the White Island, Lefkada is wild in the west, with perfect beaches, a turquoise sea and rugged mountains above fertile eastern valleys. The rural tradition of centuries lives on in unspoilt villages amongst vineyards and olive groves.



MEGANISI

A unique island of where tradition and relaxation are combined to create a small, peaceful island where time really does stand still.



PARGA

Parga is justifiably referred to as the jewel of mainland Greece. It is an incredibly beautiful town and the most perfect place by the sea. Picturesque and dramatic scenery enriched by a long and interesting history provide compelling reasons to explore the area.



PAXOS

The island of olives is a holiday paradise welcoming visitors returning year after year. Apart from Gaios, the bustling island port and capital, the rest of Paxos is comprised of small hamlets and isolated houses with no large holiday complexes. Even at the height of the season, this remains a peaceful island where it is possible to wander along old mule tracks and discover shaded paths down to hidden coves.



CORFU

The most romantic and verdant island of the Ionian. Corfu has inspired writers and poets for over a thousand years. Despite its popularity, the magic remains through its remote, traditional mountain villages, glorious bays and beaches, as well as its rich architectural and archeological heritage. We operate solely to the beautiful bays and harbours of Corfu's idyllic north eastern coastline.



SKOPELOS

The island of reefs, a magnificent craggy coastline hiding secluded bays and narrow inlets, each with a sheltered beach fringed by pine forests and olive groves. Skopelos is remarkably undeveloped. The island's eponymous capital is a bustling harbour with a maze of narrow paved streets, old churches and a Venetian fortress.



PELION

The Pelion Peninsula is truly unique. The Aegean on the one side, the sheltered inland sea of the Pagasitic Gulf on the other and the mountains of the Pelion in the north. The protected forests of oak, chestnut and beech are the crowning glory of the Pelion. Unaltered over the centuries, they cover every hillside, valley and ravine. The Pelion is unsurpassed for exploration on foot.



ALONISSOS

The remotest of the three inhabited islands, this is the haven we all dream about when life becomes too stressful. This narrow wooded island, once called Ikos is about relaxation and tranquility. There are many old trails, criss-crossing the island leading down to the uncrowded beaches.



SKIATHOS

The smallest of the three inhabited islands and the most popular, due in part to its airport, but mainly because of its string of golden sandy beaches, bustling Skiathos Town and its clear waters. The west coast is spectacular and largely undeveloped, whilst the interior is still rural with olive groves, pine woods and aromatic hillsides that few explore.

If you should have any questions that remain unanswered, please do not hesitate to contact your Representative.

On behalf of all the Ionian Island Holidays Team, we wish you a very enjoyable holiday!





IONIAN & AEGEAN ISLAND HOLIDAYS

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