



# Ionian Islands

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## Best Places to Stay

- » Emelisse Hotel (p693)
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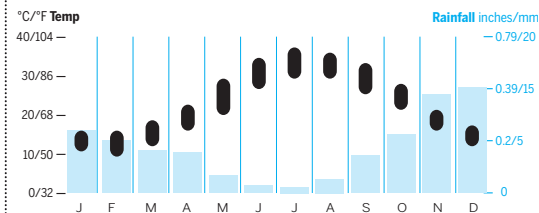
## Why Go?

The Ionian Islands (Τα Ιόνια Νησιά) stand apart from mainstream Greek life. With their cooler climate, abundant olive groves, cypress trees and beautifully forested mountains, the Ionians are a lighter, greener version of Greece. The Venetians, French and British have shaped the architecture, culture and (excellent) cuisine, and the unique feel of Ionian life has been evoked from Homer to Durrell.

Though the islands appear linked in a chain down the west coast of mainland Greece (with the exception of Kythira, which sits at the southern tip of the Peloponnese), each has a distinct landscape and cultural history. Corfu Town combines Parisian-style arcades, Venetian alleyways and Italian-inspired delicacies. Kefallonia, Paxi and Ithaki preserve wild terrain and a relaxed feel. Lefkada has some of the best beaches in Greece, if not the world. The Ionians offer something for adventure seekers, food lovers, culture vultures and beach bums alike.

## When to Go

### Corfu Town



**May** Life is still quiet and the wildflowers are in bloom everywhere.

**Jul** Escape the heat in the rest of Greece and head to its coolest islands.

**Sep** Leaves change and the harvest of *robola* grapes is happening in Kefallonia.

# Ionian Islands Highlights

1 Explore world-class museums, fortresses, restaurants and Venetian and British architecture in **Corfu Town** (p666)

2 Hop from gorgeous harbour to gorgeous harbour in pastoral **Paxi** (p676)

3 Treat yourself to top restaurants in Kefallonia's charming **Fiskardo** (p692) and striking **Assos** (p692)

4 Learn to windsurf (p682) at **Vasiliki** or (p687) kayak and cave in **Kefallonia**

5 Rank your favourite beaches, from the busiest on Corfu or Zakynthos to the quieter joys of Paxi or **Lefkada's west coast** (p683)

6 Walk the paths of Homer in **Ithaki** (p696)

7 Discover the tiny villages, waterfalls and remote coves of **Kythira** (p702)



To Kythira (see inset) (260km);  
Antikythira (see inset) (290km)