



# Ionian Islands

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## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Arriva Fish Restaurant (p487)
- ➔ Arhontiko (p496)
- ➔ Klimataria (p482)
- ➔ Irida (p500)
- ➔ Il Vesuvio (p478)

## Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Hotel Perantzada (p502)
- ➔ Petani Bay Hotel (p498)
- ➔ Siorra Vittoria (p478)
- ➔ Levant Hotel (p484)
- ➔ Torri E Merli (p487)

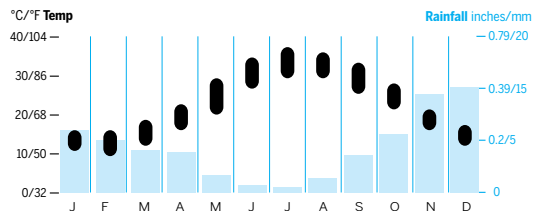
## Why Go?

With their cooler climate, abundant olive and cypress trees and forested mountains, the Ionians (Τα Ιόνια Νησιά) are a lighter, greener version of Greece. The Venetians, French and British have all in their own way shaped the architecture, culture, (excellent) cuisine – and the unique feel of Ionian life.

Though the islands appear linked in a chain down the west coast of mainland Greece, each has a distinct landscape and cultural history. Corfu Town has Parisian-style arcades, Venetian alleyways and Italian-inspired delicacies. Kefallonia boasts soaring mountains and vineyards; Paxi's Italianate harbour villages are impossibly pretty; and soulful Ithaki preserves wild terrain and a sense of history. Zakynthos has sea caves and waters teeming with turtles. Lastly, Lefkada has some of the best turquoise-lapped beaches in Greece, while Kythira feels off-the-beaten-path and mysterious. 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 colour, and the Robola grapes are being harvested in Kefallonia.

## Ionian Islands Highlights

- 1 Exploring world-class museums, fortresses, restaurants and Venetian, French and British architecture in **Corfu Town** (p475).
- 2 Hopping from one gorgeous harbour to another in pastoral **Paxi** (p484).
- 3 Treating yourself to top restaurants in Kefallonia's charming **Fiskardo** (p499) and striking **Assos** (p499).
- 4 Learning to windsurf at **Vasiliki** (p490; Lefkada) or diving, kayaking and caving in **Kefallonia** (p493).
- 5 Ranking your favourite beaches, from the busiest on Corfu or Zakynthos to the quieter joys of Paxi or **Lefkada's west coast** (p491).
- 6 Walking the paths of Homer in **Ithaki** (p500).
- 7 Discovering the tiny villages, waterfalls and remote coves of **Kythira** (p507).

