

Yachtcharter Greece in the Ionian Sea

Every day another island with a distinct character, short distances, gentle wind, everything in the protection of the mainland - only the Ionian Sea can offer this advantages in Greece. Crews will discover beautiful island villages, which display more Venetian style than the simple white in the Aegean. Next to the tourist-highlight Corfu one finds rather small places, which are not too overcrowded by the mainland tourists, and have their very own lifestyle tempo. And in between: as much green as nowhere else in Greece.

Compared to the Croatian coast, the weather is more stable before and after season. In the summer-months a north-west thermal dominates, which brings the ideal sailing wind of 3-4 Beaufort. Often winds calm down during the evening and bring quiet nights in breathtaking bays. The winds mostly rise around noon.

Crews can discover the area by starting their trip from two different ports, which will cause a different itinerary: who is sailing on Corfu during one week has to sail more miles and has little less choice than in the south. However, the flight connection is much better. If you start from Lefkas, you are right in the heart of the area, the distances are here the shortest, practically never much more than 10 nautical miles to the next great destination.

Therefore we start by introducing the one week itinerary from Corfu to the south. Later you find the one week itinerary from Lefkas. Whoever sails two weeks from Corfu, simply combines both.



Itinerary 1

Starting from Corfu. The relaxed tour ca. 97 nautical miles. The advanced tour ca. 165 nautical miles

Corfu- Mourtos 24 nautical miles

Sweeten your arrival day with a trip through the quirky old town of Corfu which is a must see. Around 20 minutes in the Cab. Visit the old fortress for a great view!
On the next morning a 24 miles trip towards Mourtos on the mainland. The village consists of a long beach with bars and Taverns. The spots with the best protection are in the small Marina, however they are often occupied by a flotilla.
On the Community-pier partial swell and rocks, therefore it is necessary to check the depth below the rudder, therefore one might consider to move further out during the evening.
The ones who prefer to lay at anchor use the bay in front of the Aqua-Park to the west, or the bay north of the island Mavros Notos. Take care to sail around the Island Syvota, since on direct passage there is a shallow sandbar of only 2 meters depth!

Mourtos- Lakka/Island Paxos 12 nautical miles

On the second day change into one of the most beautiful bays in the Ionian Sea. The bay of Lakka with its turquoise waters, surrounded by hills, olive trees and small villages. Excellent protection unless the wind comes from north. Yachts anchor in the wide bay. Who has less than 2 meters draft can also stay at the mole in town. On land one finds several cozy taverns and restaurants, shops, supermarkets and a very good bakery. Only few tourists make it here and time seems to be standing still. However, the bay is crowded by yachts during the summer months. Tip! Crews from Mourtos can sail directly to Gaios and stop in Lakka on the return trip!

Lakka-Gaios/ Paxos 6 nautical miles



A rather lazy sailing day: Who starts in Lassa can sail around the northern cape and down the west coast towards the blue caves, anchor and bay. It's best to do this in the morning with calm or no winds, as its swelling during the later day. Following one travels by Lakka and south along the eastern coast of Paxos. On this tour you come by Longos, a tiny village with two,try nice bars and taverns, perfect for a lunch- or bathing stop. Stay in the bay as the mole is to shallow. Attention! A (charted) reef is located in front of the bay and one has to go around it in a wide arc!
The destination of the days trip is the unique harbor of Gaios: On the northern entry to the harbor you will find a bay, curling around a forested island. Moor wherever is place, however signs indicate areas that are reserved for cruising vessels until 5pm.
The village with its small chapel near the pier and the crooked alleys is quite scenic, the restaurants and bar rustic and traditional. Day-Trip with the dinghy to the island Agios Nikolaos on the opposite side. There is an old Venetian fortress which is now overgrown by pines. In between the castle walls and towers one can still find the canons. Great view. One needs a permit to visit the island (near the tourist information at the post office) but few follow this rule.

Gaios-Parga 11 nautical miles



A shift back to the mainland. The town Parga on the foot of a mountain which holds another fortress. In the town the most secured anchor spots are in the small harbor a little west to the town. Watch out for the 2 shipwrecks below the surface. If the harbor is full, there is also the option to lay outside beyond the bulwark with the rope westwards or in front of the bay on anchor. The town harbor is reserved for the ferries and boat tours to Antipaxos. East of the town harbor is a mini bay with place for 2-3 yachts, but it is narrow and contains some rocks.

Parga is a lively tourist spot with many nice shops and taverns, some spectacular on a cliff or below the fortress. The town offers extraordinary views in the evening. The ruins can be visited. Tip: Whoever wants to take it slow can sail back north via Plataria or Petriti, who wants to sail more during his trip should head further south towards Preveza or Lefkas, find more information below.

Itinerary 2

1 week from Lefkas ca. 90 nautic miles (or 14 days from Corfu)

The city of Lefkas is not a tourist hotspot like Corfu, but the crew starts in the center of this sailing waters. The distances are even shorter and in the east of the islands Lefkas, Ithaca, Kephallonia and Zakynthis, where one is protected from some winds, one can sail perfectly and safe. However, one has to be aware of the falling gusts one the west of Kalamos and the "wind nuzzle" in between Ithaca and Kephalonia. Tip for Lefkas: Visit the rustic, traditional Ouzo distillery "Fragoulis"(www.fragoulis.com). Spirits in wooden barrels and you can try everything before a purchase.

Lefkas-Meganisi (Vathi or anchor bay) 11 nautic miles

This short stint stats by passing through the Lefkas channel, which tends accumulate sand and become shallow (don't go to close to the edges) but it has been excavated recently.
Following you will sail by the island Skorpios, which formerly belonged to Onassis. Your goal of the day is the island Meganisi, which offers plenty pretty bays for anchoring in the north. The most beautiful is probably Ormos Kapela in the west end. With a land line you will feel like in Abraham's bosom. Plenty of green areas and hills surround the area, which makes it perfect for bathing. For dinner one can get on land and walk towards Vathi in the northwest. This takes around 25 minutes.
Alternatively you can anchor in the town harbor. It is quickly full, but offers good spots. The second marina is more expensive, but also offers sanitary facilities, electricity, water and a gas station. Restaurant tip for fish: Errikos Tavern.

Meganisi-Kalamos 13 nautic miles



A beautiful cruise to the green and steep island and its main town on the foot of the mountains. In the comfortable and atmospheric harbor the landlord of the tavern, George, directs the arriving yachts on their spots. He knows what he is doing, following his lead makes sense. Falling gusts during the night, pull in the anchor. George's tavern offers culinary average but also some showers. On the other side you will find a nice bar. Alternatively Kastos on the neighboring island is the same beautiful and is just 4 miles ahead. Only small space, outside landlines to the bulwark.

Kalamos-Vathi on Ithaka 20 nautic miles

This longer stint ideally begins with a stop for swimming in the Port Leone bay on the southwest of Kalamos. There are good anchor spots in front of the ruins. If you want to go a further distance can stop in the one hose bay on the island Atokos. Vibrant turquoise water, steep and densely forested mountains, a lonely chapel – a dream. Following sail on to Vathi on Oithaka. Around 4pm the wind picks up near the entrance, watch out for gusts. Stop in the harbor bay south or west of the pier, or anchor free standing, the ground is excellent. After sunrise you will have a truly magical view on the town on the hillside. The strong falling gusts during 5-8pm completely subside during nighttime. A magnificent town with cozy taverns (tip: Cpt. Nikos) and bars, very good bakery.



Vathi-K ioni or Frikes 7 nautic miles

Whoever is in the Ionian for only one week and starts in Lefkas will most likely again turn towards north at this point. Who has two weeks sails south around Ithaka and stops near Sami or Efimia on Kefalonia. Take a bathing stop in Pera Pegadi! Sami and Efimia are inviting towns with good harbors and the Opportunity to take a tour to the Melissani flowstone caves. There are more good bays for swimming approximately 2 nautic miles south of Vathi in Ormos Filatro, directly in frnt of Kioni or Frikes.
A word about Zakynthos: If you want to visit the famous shipwreck bay arrive in the morning, during the afternoon there is often too much swell!
Kioni is a especially nice located small village at the end of a deep bay which hosts sympathetic taverns and cafes. However it is often very crowded due to many flotillas. Arrive early, during midday is best. Is it already to crowded Friskes, just a few miles north, is a very good and calm alternative. A sleepy village, a couple of taverns, bars, supermarkets. Its location is spectacular in a crevice. There can be falling gusts in the afternoon or when you have strong wind from the west. The best spots are directly behind the bulwark.



Kioni-Fiskardo 10 nautic miles

Again a short sailing day, but this one has a good reason. Fiscardo is probably the most beautiful harbor in the Ionian sea, correspondingly one should arrive early, around noon, to find a spot. The semi-round harbor bay with the houses colored in pastel and the blooming bougainvillea that is everywhere in this area is one of the highlights of the Ionian Sea. The gangway literally will bring you right between the tables of the taverns. Cafes, Bars and Shops – here it is never boring, the harbor cinema is always worth watching. Many Flotillas arrive here. Mooring anchor and stern to the pier. Alternatively, if Fiskado is to full, sail to Ormos Syvota on the south side of Lefkas. Perfectly protected harbor and a important center for "Yachties". Many Restaurants and Bars.

Fiskardo-Spartochorion 18 nautic miles

The next stint leads back towards Meganisi. The town resides majestically high upon a plateau, below the small harbour Portoo Spilia invites with his excellent mooring sports in front of the restaurant (incl. Showers). The short walk into the town with it's narrow and crooked steets is worth it. The breathtaking view and the relaxing greek ambience. In the bay you can hardly lay on anchor, its simply to deep!

Spartochorion-Lefkas 12 nautic miles

On this way against the summer themal back to the charterbase one can make a swimming stop at the sandy beach of Ormos Marathias. In the high season in Lefkas at the gas station longer waiting times during return days.



Note:

Please note that this is a suggested itinerary and not all yachts have the necessary licences / insurance to call at all destinations / islands.

Please clarify this with the charter company before planning your trip. You will receive the necessary papers for your route planning from the lessor before the start of the charter, so these must be requested from the hirer / skipper in good time. The terms and conditions of the lessor / yacht owner and, if applicable, their restrictions apply.

Please note the current developments and travel advice on the website of the Federal Foreign Office.

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