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The Ionian

EMBARKATION: PATRA
DISEMBARKATION: PATRA

Patra- Zakynthos (53 miles)	Day 1
Zakinhtos - Kefalonia (Poros) (23 miles)	Day 2
Kefalonia (Poros) - Fiskardo (20 miles)	Day 3
Fiskardo - Lefkas (6 miles)	Day 4
Lefkas - Preveza (18 miles)	Day 5
Preveza - Meganisi - Ithaki (34miles)	Day 6
Ithaki - Sami (Kefalonia) (13 miles)	Day 7
Sami - Patra (52 miles)	Day 8



PATRA: is the capital of the region or prefecture. It owes its name to Patreas, chief of the Achaians. The city is among the most important in Greece, and the largest in the Peloponnese. It is also a major transportation center, linking the country with Italy and the Peloponnese with the Ionian Islands. The city extends from the shore up to the Castle. It is divided into two parts, the upper and the lower, whose layout, parks and plazas give it a definite distinction. The old city, at the foot of the castle, still has quite a number of attractive neoclassical houses, while the lower city has many mansions, such as those housing the Municipal Theatre, the Odeon, etc.

The city's innumerable pastry shops, its quiet little cafes, its wide range of tavernas, its lively streets thriving with locals, foreigners and transient travelers complete the picture of Patra as a lively bustling port-center much celebrated thought out Greece.

Patra offers a wide variety of cultural opportunities. In the

Municipal Theatre, and in the open-air theatre in the Venetian Castle visiting theatres, orchestras and other performing artists make regular appearances. St Andrew's Church is regarded as one of the most beautiful churches in the Balkans. The ancient Odeon is second in fame only to the Irodion (Odeon) of Athens. The Castle is an impressive place, where both the Temple of Panachaïda Athina and the Artemis Temple used to be.

The museum of Patra is one of the most important museums of Greece with fabulous treasures of national and international significance. Patra is famous for its annual Carnival, which occurs in February or March where people get together in groups, dress up, dance in the streets and take part in the annual parade.

Patra has a variety of restaurants, pubs, indoor and open-air cafeterias, wine bars, beer houses, jazz bars, and late-night clubs with live music. Nightlife in Patra starts about 12 midnight when most clubs start to fill up. The main shopping district is the area between Georgiou Square and Olgas Square with all kinds of stores and many boutiques.

ZAKYNTHOS: is the third largest of the Ionian Islands and its terrain is varied; there are fertile plains in the southeastern part, which merge gently into peaceful bays and golden beaches while the western side of the island is mountainous with steep cliffs along its coasts.

The mild, Mediterranean climate and the plentiful winter rainfall present the island with dense vegetation. Olive oil, currants, grapes, citrus fruit are principal products. The capital, which has the same name as the prefecture, is the town of Zakynthos -apart from its official name it is also called Chora-.

Zakynthos is the green island of poetry, of song and love, the native land of D.Solomos, the writer of the Greek national anthem. There is a great deal of cultural activities on the island -especially in the summer season-, including frequent theatrical performances, concerts and recitals, lectures and exhibitions.

A sightseeing must are the blue caves. These maritime caves are situated in Aspros Vrahos of Krimnos, on the Skinari cape, which is the most northern part of the island. The biggest of the caves is the Blue Grotto whose entrance was discovered in 1897. In the deeper caverns, the visitor has the feeling that everything under the waters: the rock, the keel of the boat, the body of a swimmer, reflects a bright blue hue.

Navagio, a renowned beach at the eastern part of the island, is situated near the village of Anafonitria. Crystal clear waters break on a white sandy beach, where a rusting hull lies half-buried. Imposing cliffs, eroded by wind and sea, descend behind in completing a spectacular picture. The wreck happened in 1983 and the cargo onboard was contraband cigarettes. The beach is only accessible by boat.

Gerakas is a broad beach with fine sand in a spectacular setting at the southern part of the island. Gerakas is also one of the major breeding grounds in the Mediterranean for caretta-caretta, the loggerhead turtle, so there are severe restrictions on both the development of the area and the activities of individual tourists.

Xygia is a small, shingle beach. It is known for its spring of sulfur that turns the water white, spreading a characteristic smell all around. Swimming there is believed to be of therapeutic value for rheumatism and arthritis.

The traditional taverna 'Ariadne' located in the center of the popular village of Tsilivi provides a varied selection of Zakynthian cuisine, which singles it out as somewhere special to visit during your stay.

'To Paradosiako' (literally means Traditional) is a marvelous traditional Greek taverna, situated on the main road, 100 m from the beach of Alykes. Delicious dishes accompanied with the finest, local wines will sure awake your senses. For an early drink go to the 'Red Lemon' bar in Alykes which is located literally on the beach! Watch the sun go down sipping on a frozen daiquiri. For late night entertainment the 'Rescue Club' is the biggest and finest in Laganas.





KEFALLONIA: the largest island in the Ionian, is a land of contrasts. Just for starters don't miss the view from the castle at Assos. Of the old, immensely attractive city of Argostoli, the capital, which was destroyed by an earthquake in 1953, very little remains; one or two houses, the arched bridge stretching across the lagoon and the obelisk at its centre, which commemorates the date of its construction. During your stay there you could visit the interesting Archaeological Museum and the Folk Art Museum

Lixouri, Kefallonia's second largest town, has a peaceful atmosphere, a lovely 19th century mansion- museum, and vestiges of the ancient city of Pali.

Fiscardo is one of the most picturesque ports of the Ionian, founded by the Norman Robert Guiskard. Just south of Fiscardo is the beach of Myrtos, which is one of the most spectacular beaches in Greece with tall cliffs, white sand and the color of sea that most travelers are seeking when they come to the Greek islands. If you continue along the coast there are many more small coves and beaches but most of them are accessible only by boat. Or go for a swim in the crystal clear waters of Poros. One can also go up to the top of Mt. Enos (1.628 meters above sea level). Its slopes are covered with tall, cedar-like fir trees that grow nowhere else in the world.

The area of Katelios in the southeast part of the island has two outstanding beaches, one near the seaside hamlet of Katelio and the other at Skala. Discovered in this area are the ruins of a 3rd century BC building from the height of the Roman era, perhaps the home of a wealthy Roman businessman, which contains excellent, well-preserved mosaics

In the area of the port of Sami, there are interesting geological phenomena, like the Cave of Drongarati, with beautiful stalagmites and stalactites, and the cave of Melissani with its subterranean lake. The caves are open to the public and if you are lucky you may catch an orchestra performance in Drongarati, which has fantastic acoustics.

Another favorite visiting spot is Karavomylos, where there are springs of sea water that have traveled underground from the area of Katavothres, near Argostoli, 35 km away. Kefallonia is one of the few places where the rare turtle *Caretta-Caretta* lays its eggs. The romance movie, *Captain Coreli's Mandolin* starring Nicholas Cage and Penelope Cruz, was shot on Kefallonia.

If you want to join a traditional Kefallonitic cuisine, try taverna 'Diana' in Argostoli, which serves fresh fish near the sea. If you go to Katelios in Kefallonia, make a point of visiting the 'Lighthouse' taverna, a unique place to taste the Greek specialties and seafood where the tables are almost floating in the sea.

When in Fiscardo visit 'The Captain's Cabin' and 'Taverna Nicolas', but hint at the near impossibility of finding a table in the summer unless you get there early or book in advance. Situated at Lassi of Argostoli is one of the most wonderful bars you can find. It has an exquisite view any which side you choose to sit and rest. Its name is 'Eden'.

For clubbing the 'J & A' club in Poros is a spacious fun club with music that adds fuel to the fire of amusement, playing both Greek and foreign.

When in Kefallonia make sure to pick of some of the local specialties like: thyme honey, mandoles (pralines), robola wine (white) and quince paste.

LEFKADA: is a hilly island marked by karstic action, lying off the Playia Peninsula in Acarnania, from which a shallow lagoon varying in width between 600 m and 5 km separates it. It is now linked with the mainland by a causeway and a ferry.

A range of hills rising to a height of 1158 m in Mount Stavrotas and running southwest to end at Cape Doukatou occupies most of the island. It was from this Lefkadian rock of gleaming white limestone that Sappho was supposed to have thrown herself for love of the handsome Phaon.

Off the southeast coast of Lefkada is the beautiful unspoiled island of Meganisi, with sandy beaches and famous sea-caves.



One of the most famous beaches on Lefkada, Porto Katsiki is situated at the extreme southern end of the West Coast. The beach catches the sun during the afternoon.

In the far southwest of Lefkada, Egremni is one of Lefkada's most beautiful beaches. Your reward, when you make it is an endless sand/shingle/pebble beach stretching away into the distance.



Milos Beach is a beautiful beach situated over the headland immediately to the south of Agios Nikitas village. The beach is sand/shingle, but pebblier towards the southern end, and steeply shelving. It catches the sun all day from mid-morning. No facilities so bring water and food.

In Lefkada's market, one will find beautiful hand-made embroidery, oil, wine and sausages and salami of local production, lentils from the village of Eglouvi, fruits and garden products from Vassiliki, as well as nuts from the village of Agios Petros.

The 'Sapfo' restaurant serves very good food and fresh fish. At night, you should go to 'Adriatica' and 'Romantica' for Ionian delicacies while listening to serenades.

In Agios Nikitas, the tavernas 'Ostria' and 'Belvedere' serve traditional Greek food.

A must see when in the area are the waterfalls at Nydri and the island of Scorpios which happens to belong to Aristotelis Onasis.

A must in the nightlife of Lefkada is 'Este' bar, situated at the beach of the town it offers a huge selection of authentic spirits, beers and refreshing long drinks. You could begin your day drinking your coffee and relaxing admiring the beautiful blue sea or in the evening for your favorite drink; all at the 'Il Posto' club.

The 'Alexander' club located in the heart of Nydri is a spacious club with great music, filled with its fans, and light effects that will make your night unforgettable.



PREVEZA: The prefecture of Preveza lies on the north side of the western coast of Greece.

Endless beaches with transparent water, forests that are close to the sea, the aquatic zones and the virgin environment compose on the whole a result, which fascinates and relaxes the visitor. Preveza is a city with an island character and its own colour and tradition. The hospitable people of this city enjoy themselves at the cobble-stoned port with a view over the Amvrakikos Gulf with a plethora of traditional taverns and ouzeries in narrow alleys.

The visitor has a wide range of cultural activities: from modern entertainment to the Festival of the Sardine and from the National Music Festival at the Venetian castle of the city to ancient tragedy at the Nikopolis theatre. In Preveza you can savor genuine Greek and local delicacies, made with real pride. Dozens of small tavernas line

the narrow streets, desiring only to give you a good time. It's worth it. Preveza is fortunate to be surrounded by two very different seas. To the west the Ionian is open and to the east the Amvrakikos is closed.



Do visit the archaeological museum of Nicopolis, which contains collections of architectural parts and sculptures from the Ancient City and offerings from the cemetery of Nicopolis. Open Monday, 12:00-19:00, Tuesday-Sunday, 08:00-19:00.

Agricultural products produced in Preveza are citrus fruits, vegetables, corn, rice and cotton. Its industry processes fruits and fruit juices. One of Europe's last remaining colonies of silver pelicans survive in the Tsoukhalio lagoon, an enchanting Ionian city located at the entrance of the Amvrakikos gulf.

The hot springs of Preveza are located within the city of Preveza near the seashore and offer hydrotherapy for

rheumatics, arthropathy, meta-traumatic stages, rachitis, neuralgia, and dermatological / gynaecological complaints.



MEGANISI: is the Greek Island of everyone's dreams - small, unspoiled and absolutely beautiful. So perfect is Megani that when you arrive in the enchanting little port of Vathi, where pretty pastel-washed fishermen's houses line the deep and beautiful bay, and settle down to an ouzo and plate of 'mezes' by the quayside, you have to pinch yourself to make sure that you are not actually dreaming.

A trio of quite magnificent bays notches the northern coast, each headed by a beach and enclosed on either side by wooded hillsides. As yacht anchorage's, these almost hidden bays cannot be bettered, which is one of the reasons why Megani was a pirate stronghold right up to the present century.

From Spatiochori, perched on a bluff above the sea, the view over the water to the little islands of Madouri and Skorpis is superb, one to be savoured in the evening

over drinks or dinner. The village is enchanting – a maze of alleys and lanes, along which can be found half a dozen tavernas and several shops – as in the bay of Spilia below which has three waterside tavernas.

This rare combination of land and sea together with the natural and virgin beauty of the islands is unique in Greece.

Here are to be found the three picturesque villages and main settlements Vathi, Katomeri and Spatiochori, each one having kept its own character and loveliness. Their traditional architecture, the picturesque harbors with the fish taverns, the captivating view, the bright green scenery and the crystal clear sea will make you remember times that have gone, since tourism hasn't left its evidence here yet.

The hospitable people, their peaceful way of living, the interchange of the scenery, pleasure and the special food create an ideal place for vacation. Ai-Giannis, Spilia, Ambelaki, Fanari, Atherinos and Limonari are the best known beaches of the island, whereby a visit to the grottos Papanikoli and Giovanni is also worthwhile.



ITHAKI: is famous as the island of Odysseus and corresponds closely to the descriptions in Homer's *Odyssey*. The interest, though, of the archeologists is focused on the period when the king of the island was Odysseus at around the 12th century BC. It was during that period that the Greeks were off to conquer Troy.

It is worth pointing out the role which it played during the struggle of the Greeks against the Turks. Prominent citizens of Ithaki participated in the secret "Filiki Etairia" (i.e. "Society Of Friends") which was instrumental in organising the Greek Revolution of 1821, and Greek fighters found refuge there. In addition, the participation of Ithacans during the siege of Messolongi and the naval battles with Turkish ships at the Black Sea and Danube was significant.

The "Aetos" hill rises majestically above the Pissaetos port. The classical walls belonged to the ancient city of Alakomenes, where, according to tradition, Odysseus was born.

First stop is the harbor and capital Vathi, stretching around a bright green bay which climbs like an amphitheatre up the surrounding hill is well protected in the arms of an enclosed gulf, almost in the middle of the island. There are many worthwhile places to visit in the town: the archaeological museum, the remains of a Venetian castle at the entrance of the harbour and the library with rare books.

At the 'Ulysses' restaurant come and taste the most delicious dishes of Greek traditional cuisine. Their specialities are "kouneli stifado" (rabbit casserole with onions and vine leaves) and "live" lobsters.

'Sirens', Ithaca Yacht Club, is a charming family style restaurant and bar located in the heart of the port of Vathi. Locals and tourists enjoy authentic homestyle Greek and international cuisine and sip cocktails.

Some of the traditional Ithacan meals and sweets, which are still made today, are:

- Flaouna: dough mixed with sesame seeds and raisins, baked in the oven and before served it is soaked with "pikimezi" (ouzo).
- Riganado: slices of bread dipped into water and then topped with oregano, olive oil, tomato and white local cheese, it is a delicious easy snack.
- Ravani: a local sweet still made and served in certain cafes in Ithaca. It is made of rice, honey and olive oil, baked all together in a deep pan.
- Halvas: a sweet made from wheat hearts, olive oil, sugar, local ouzo and almonds boiled altogether

