

Sailing Greece - Ionian Islands

Overview: it's not a chance that Ulysses started his voyage in these waters. Numberless islands, desert coves and beaches, romantic ports, rich tavernas, plenty of wind and well organized services. With just a tiny bit of history and art thrown in...

The top places to visit: Corfu, Paros, Assos, Ithaca, Fiskardo, Parga, Paxos, Kephallonia



Our rating:

Wind and Sea: easy

Kids friendly: yes

Lifestyle: relax

Gourmet: not very refined but excellent ingredients

Mileage (approx) :90

Cruise length: at least 7 days

When to go: march to october

Harbours and marinas: excellent public harbours

Gourmet and restaurants: good

Our top 3 SAILPRO anchorages

1. Assos
2. Paxos
3. Sivota

Our Sailing notes

Weather and anchorages: the Ionian is possibly the calmest destination in the Med. Weather is predictable, breeze regime in summer, plenty of anchorages and well sheltered waters. One of the places where you can start your cruising career..

Gourmet: Greece is as far from nouvelle Cuisine as you can imagine, but they certainly know their way about their excellend ingredients. Although greek salad every day might be too much, one cannot but fall in love with feta and onions. My favourite dishes in Greece are grilled octopus and stuffed squid. To die for. If you prefer meat, mutton and lamb is the way to go. Greece is one of the capitals of the grill, so follow the smell of coals, sit down with the very good local brews and wash down the fish and beef barbecues. Local sauces are also surprisingly good, based on yogurt, olives, herbs and cucumber. Tzatziki is the most famous. Forget wines, though...

Restaurants:

Trehantiri, Mr. Gerasimos Dorizas - Ithaca

Ancora - Fiskardo

Jorge - Kastos

Spartakoi - Meganisi

Kastos: the panoramic restaurant on top of the hill has been warmly recommended

Our itinerary

We start late afternoon as usual from Lefkas to reach **Meganisi** and stop for the night in the quiet harbour of Spartaori.

As a next stop we suggest to sail around the S tip of Lefkas as far as Katsiki enjoying one of the wonderful beaches 'en route', before crossing to one of the best anchorages of the area, Assos, in the NW corner of Cephalonia.

Assos is definitely a village that deserves a visit and one can linger at ease because it's a short crossing to the next port, another jewel, even if more famous, Fiskardo, a small harbour full of surprises and charm.

From **Fiskardo** it's time (and close) to make a short crossing to Ulysses homeland, **Ithaca**, where we suggest to stop at the picturesque port of Kioni.

It's indeed very pleasant island hopping around here. Even **Skorpios**, the private island belonging to the Onassis family, is close by. It's waters are pristine. For the night we might suggest to let go in front of the beach at Ormos Variko.

In our humble opinion the journey S to Zakintos is not worth the trip, for the great sadness of the romantic poets like Foscolo who sang the beauty of this place, but it's a beauty that is better enjoyed from land. We on the other side advise to sail north, pass Lefkas and steer towards **Parga**, a nice village on the mainland. Many, many tourists like this place so do not expect a deserted village of whitewashed houses, but rather a fully fledged tourist place rich of candle and T-shirt shops, but these weight of this places could be diluted by sailing off season...

Parga is not the only place worth visiting along the mainland, and you can very well discover this enjoying the spectacular bays of **Murtos** and **Sivota**.

An ideal route would sail to Plataria before reaching **Corfu**. This big island is probably one of the best places where to embark or disembark, because the harbour is very close to the airport, and the old town is really pleasant.

Some sailors from here would love to sail to Albania, just a stone throw's away. Well, just do not ask the greece to take you there. Mor some strange reason Greeks have bad blood with basically every nation at their border, like Makedonia, Turkey and Albania. History left deep scars in the Balkans...

Corfu to **Paxos** is a pleasant sail southbound and the sailor will be amply rewarded with some of the best white beaches of the area. The coast is rugged and steep, with white walls and caves. Lakka is an excellent place to stop for the night if you do not want to lay at anchor in front of some perfect beach...

Another excellent stop in Paxos is Gaio, the main harbour, considered the Portofino of the area, the most fashionable spot around. there is a nice citadel too, not only bars!

On an ideal circular route that takes back to Lefkas the last stop would be **Antipaxos**. And a real last but not least. Perfect waters for snorkeling and diving

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