

M/Y EXPLORION

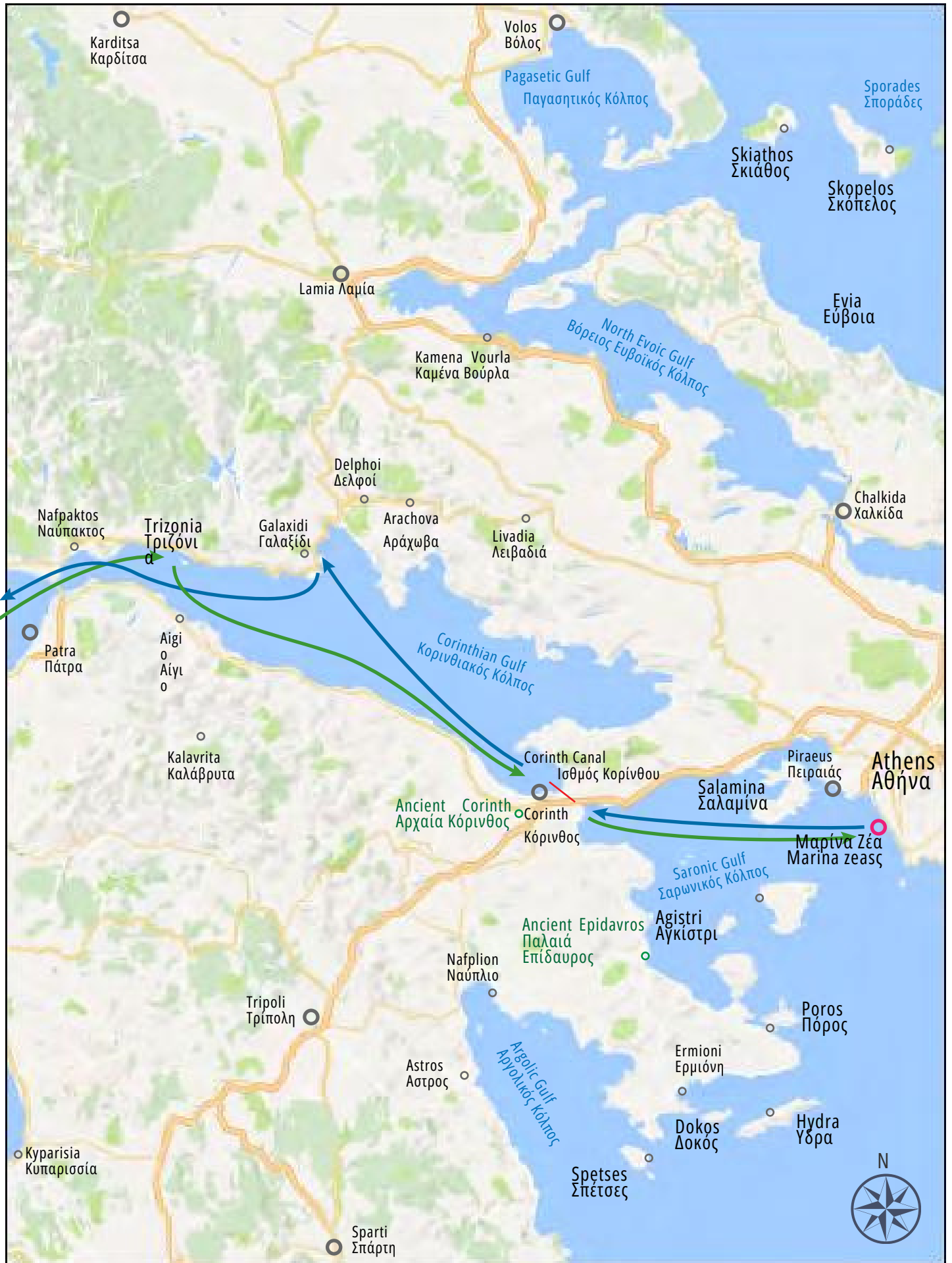
Ionian Islands 7-day Indicative Itinerary



Itinerary changes might occur due to weather conditions. Any change will be conducted in consultation with the client.

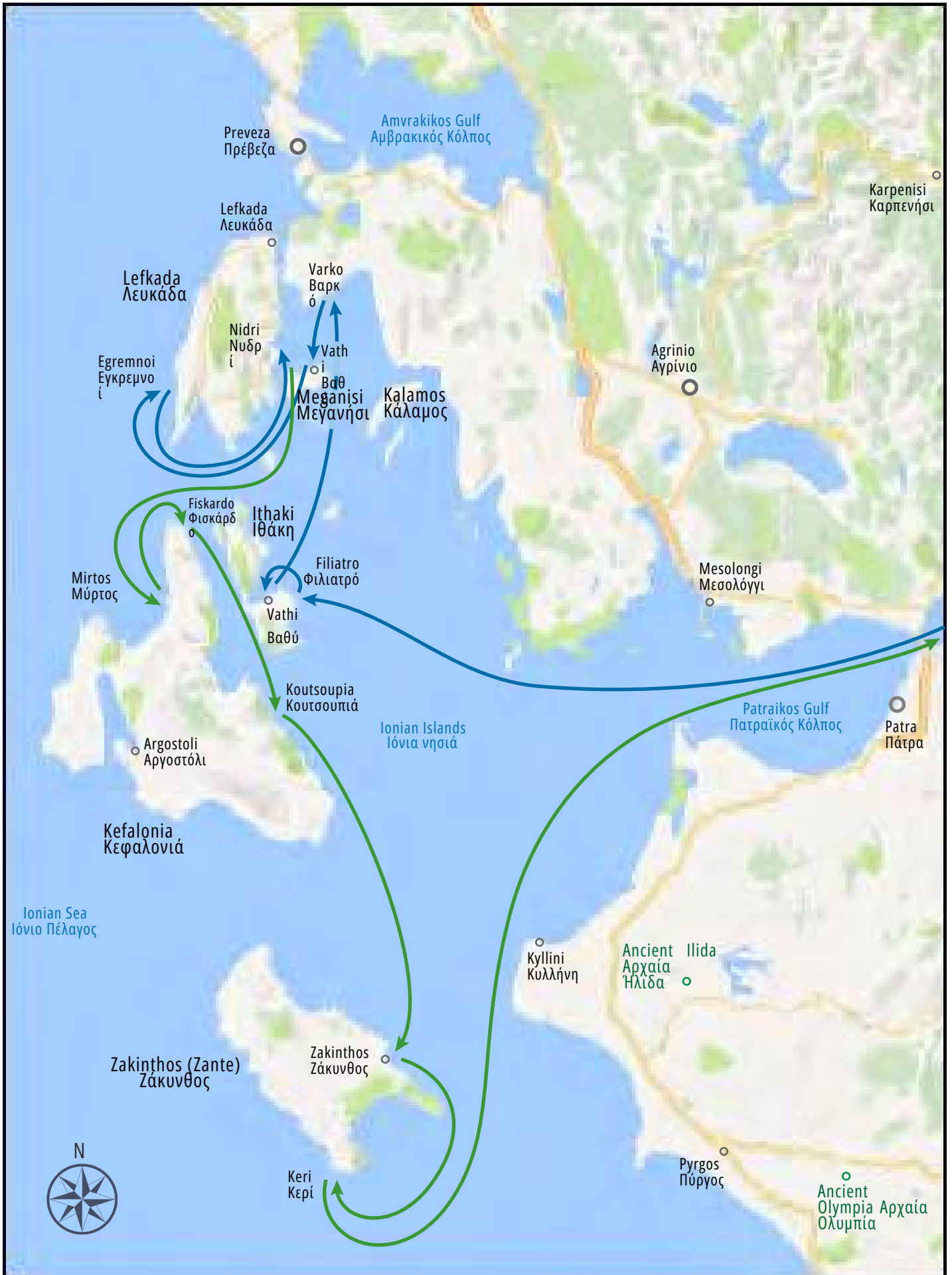
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Itinerary map (1 of 2)

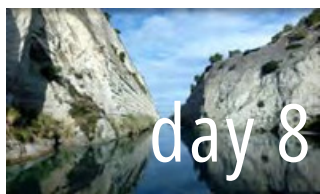
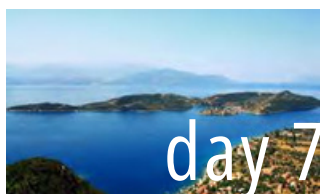
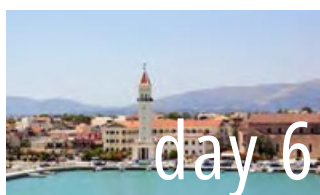
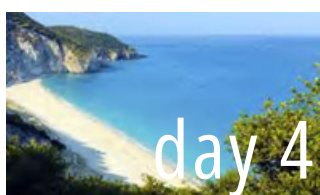
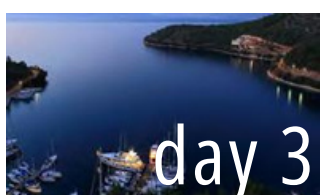
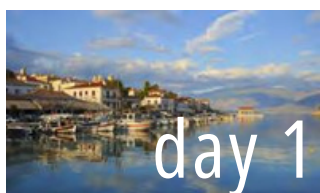


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Itinerary map (2 of 2)



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Day 1

departure from:
Marina Zeas, Athens Corinth

Canal crossing

overnight:

Galaxidi, Fokida prefecture



Cut off from other Greek mainland until 1950, the people of Galaxidi, located on the mainland's southern tip, relied on the sea for transportation. Galaxidi's most prosperous period was between 1830 and 1910 when it was a major maritime power. The town's neoclassical houses with figureheads and pebble-covered courtyards have been preserved, as have the kapetanospita, meaning "captain's houses". In the 4th century BC the town of ancient Haleion, located at an area of Central Greece that was known as "Ozolian (western) Locris", moved down from the hills to the present location of Galaxidi. There it was fortified with a stone wall as protection against attacks by the army of Philip II of Macedonia. It is believed that Haleion existed until at least 551 AD when a very strong earthquake destroyed the town. Galaxidi is mentioned for the first time in the late 10th century (981 or 996), when it was destroyed in a raid by the Bulgarians under Tsar Samuel. After the Fourth Crusade (1204) it came under the control of the Frankish Lordship of Salona, but was recovered by the Greek Despotate of Epirus in 1211. The town remained under Epirote control until the division of the realm in 1268, when it passed under the rule of John I Doukas, ruler of Thessaly. In 1311 it was conquered, along with Salona, by the Catalan Company. It was captured by the Ottomans in 1397, but was regained shortly after by the Despotate of the Morea under Theodore I Palaiologos. In 1403 it was ceded briefly to the Knights Hospitaller. In 1447/8 it was refortified by Constantine Kantakouzenos, but this did not prevent its final capture by the Ottomans shortly after. Ottoman presence in the settlement was minimal and the city flourished due to the development of maritime trade. Particularly after the Treaty of Kuchuk Kaynarca (1774), many of the ship owners of Galaxidi operated under the Russian flag. During the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) the ships of Galaxidi took part in breaking the British blockade of France by taking grain and other foodstuff into the country, earning good profits for their efforts. Despite their privileged position, the inhabitants joined immediately forces with the revolutionaries at the Greek War for Independence of 1821 and their city was destroyed twice by the Ottoman army, namely in 1821 and in 1825-6. There are various theories on the origin of this name. The most convincing explanation is that a Byzantine governor named Galaxidis found the ancient ruins of Haleion and developed it into a new town.



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Day 2

departure from:
Galaxidi, Fokida

swimming stop:

Filiatro, Ithaki

overnight:
Vathi port, Ithaki



Ithaki is the second smallest Ionian Island. It is located two nautical miles north east of Kefalonia. The island is long and narrow and is divided in two peninsulas with the bay of Molos in the middle. The island's capital Vathi is one of the world's largest natural harbours. Ithaki is a beautiful island to explore, still unspoiled by tourism and perfect for relaxing holidays. It is an excellent island for walking as the scenery is stunning. It has many kinds of wildlife and wild flower in a scenic landscape and picturesque villages. The sea is crystal-clear with emerald waters ideal for snorkelling and there are numerous golden-sand beaches.

No doubt the history of Ithaki is strongly connected to the myth of Odysseus. Neolithic finds, date it's earliest inhabitation back to at least 3000 BC. The island met its greatest glory around 1000 BC, when the kingdom of Ithaki was constituted by all the Ionian Islands and a part of the coast of Akarnania, in the mainland of Greece. The first ancient occupiers to rule the Ionians were the Mycenaeans. During the Mycenaean period, Ithaki became the power seat for the Kefalonian state which embraced all the Ionian islands and parts of the Akarnanian mainland. When Ithaki fell under Dorian rule, it wasn't long before it's power and glory slipped away to mere insignificance. At 800 - 185 BC, under the Corinth state, Ithaki became a political backwater and remained so even after power was transferred to Rome in 200 BC. During the Byzantine era 395 -1185 AD, it was annexed to Kefalonia. During the 12th and 13th centuries AD, the Normans and Franks ruled the island. Ithaki was invaded by pirates and Ottoman invaders over the centuries. It stood it's ground and it's internal strength until 1479, when the island was ransacked and violently thrust upon by Ottoman forces. Ottoman occupation lasted for 30 years. When the Venetians began their rule over Ithaki, they were forced to offer land and tax exemptions to lure settlers back. Towards the end of the 18th century, Ithaki was ruled by the French until they were conquered by the British in 1809. In 1821, Ithakans, led by the 'Friendly Society', were prominent activists during the 'War of Independence' against the Ottoman rule of mainland Greece. The bloody battles finally ended in 1864 and Ithaki was united with Greece.



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Day 3

departure from:

Vathi port, Ithaki

swimming stop:

Varko, Aitolokarnania prefecture

overnight:

Vathi port, Meganisi

Meganisi is a beautiful island in the Ionian Sea, located between Lefkada and the Greek mainland. The name of the island actually means large island. Although it is not a large island compared to other Greek islands, it is the largest of its neighboring islands, such as Kastos, Kalamos and Skorpaios. The way of life on Meganisi island is calm and quiet, and tourism is kept on the same paces. There are few tourist facilities, but they are enough for visitors. Meganisi has three beautiful villages which provide scenic and serene settings, Vathi, Katomeri and Spartochoiri. They have fish taverns, restaurants, bars and other shops that cater to the needs of tourists. Meganisi offers its visitors privacy because it is still untouched by mass tourism and has many secluded beaches. The island is lush green and it is surrounded by crystal clear water. Tour boats also go to small islands around Meganisi and also to the famous sea cave of Papanikolis, where the legendary Greek submarine Papanikolis had found shelter during the Second World War. The first traces of life on the island date back to the Neolithic era. The first name of the island was Taphos from the son of Ippothois, daughter of Lefkadiou Lelegas and Poseidon. During the 7th century B.C the island became a Corinthian colony. After the fall of Constantinople in 1204, the island was given to Venetians but soon it was incorporated to the dominion of Hepiros. In the year 1294 (until 1479) the island came into the hands of the French and then Meganisi as well as Lefkada fell under Ottoman rule until the return of the Venetians in 1684. In 1797 the islands were passed on to the hands of the French and a year later fell under Russian-Turkish rule. The Ionian State (also called Septinsular Republic) was established in 1800 until 1807. From 1807 to 1809 Meganisi was conquered by the imperial French only to fall in the hands of British in 1810. During the greek Revolution in 1821, Meganisi fought actively featuring one of the most competent leaders of the Revolution, Demos Tselios (Demetrios or Demos Ferentinos) the well known "Ghero Demo". Meganisi, Lefkada and the rest of the Ionian islands (Eptanisa) were united with Greece on the 21-05-1864 after the end of the British occupation.



M/Y EXPLORION



Day 4

departure from:

Vathis port, Meganisi

swimming stop:

Egremni

overnight:

Nidri port, Lefkada



Lefkada is famous all over the world for its exotic beaches with crystal clear waters and amazing sea color. Beaches like Porto Katsiki, Kathisma and Egremni, distinguish for the wonderful colour and the impressive landscape. Around the island, you can find lovely villages with fish taverns by the sea and surrounded by lush greenery. Nidri, Vassiliki, Sivota, the Town and Agios Nikitas are beautiful places with special character each one. There are also numerous other attractions in Lefkada including plentiful natural beauties, many historic sites, museums and monasteries. Lefkada



owes its name to the white (lefkos in Greek) rocks that characterize the southern part of the island, the cape of Lefkata. According to mythology, the poet Sappho jumped to the sea from these white rocks as she couldn't endure the torture of her love for Phaon. The first inhabitants of Lefkada were the Leleges, who were conquered by the Kefallinioi and by Laertes, father of Odysseus. In the 7th century BC Lefkada was colonised by the

Corinthians, who first excavated the channel in 650 BC to enable the passage north of their ships. Lefkada played an important role in the Persian Wars and took part in the Battle of Salamina (480 BC), the Battle of Plataea and as allies of the Spartans in the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC). As an ally of the Athenians they fought the Macedonians, whose king was Philip II, but Athens lost the battle and Lefkada fell under Macedonian rule. The island became independent in 312 BC. The ancient town Nirikos became the capital of the Akarnanian League in 272 BC. In 230 BC, it allied with the Macedonians to repress the Romans but in 198 BC, the island came under Roman domination. During the Byzantine Period it was part of the province of Achaia. In the 6th century AD, Lefkada was included into the "Scheme of Kefalonia" and became, after a temporary overthrow by the crusaders, part of the Dominion of Epirus. In 1204 the Franks conquered Constantinople and Lefkada fell under their rule and then under Sicilian rule in 1294, when the bishop Nikiforos Angelos gave the island as a dowry to his daughter who married the Sicilian Giovanni Orsini. In 1331 the island is conquered by the Angevins but in 1362 it passes into the hands of the Tocco family. In 1479 it was conquered by the Ottomans who ruled the island until 1684 (with a short-lived Venetian occupation from 1502 to 1503) when Venetian sovereignty is established. The Republican French take control in 1797 but in 1798 a joint Russian-Turkish fleet conquered Lefkada.

The Ionian State was established in Constantinople on March 1800 (also called Septinsular Republic) the first (semi-) independent Greek state -under Russo-Turkish 'pro-tection'- since the fall of the Byzantine Empire. The attempt failed in 1807 because the island returned under French rule. In 1810 the British occupy Lefkada who incorporate it into what they called the "United States of the Ionian Islands". This occupation became official with the Treaty of Paris, signed in 1815.



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Day 5

departure from:

Nidri port

swimming stop:

Mirtos, Kefalonia

overnight:

Fiskardo port, Kefalonia



Kefalonia is the largest of the Ionian islands and it is considered to have one of the most spectacular landscapes in Greece. Mount Ainos is the only mountain in the Mediterranean to have an unique fir tree called "Abies kefallia". It is a protected species and the area has been declared a National Park. Plains, lakes and rivers, caves, dense and verdant forests and wonderful beaches with golden sand and crystal clear waters of greenish-blue colours compose the unique landscape of Kefalonia. According to archaeological findings, Kefalonia was inhabited since 10.000 BC. It was one of the first places in Greece to be inhabited, as shown by fossil plants, animals, bones, etc. found, and tools dating back to 50.000 BC. From mythology we learn that Kefalos, during the Palaeolithic era founded the four main cities of the island and named them after his four sons. This explains why the island was called Tetrapolis (Four Towns) during this period. Archaeological excavations have shown that in the Mycenaean era (between 1500-1100 BC) Kefalonia was an important place. Discoveries include a number of places mentioned in Homer and the famous Mycenaean Tholos Tomb that was believed to have been erected in 1300 BC and was a resting place for the Mycenaean Kings and high ranking officials. Kefalonia participated in the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars on the side of both Athens and Sparta. In 218 BC, Philip the king of Macedonia attacked the island but was defeated thanks to the help of the Athenians. The Romans conquered Kefalonia in 187 BC after months of fighting and used it as their base against the Greeks. Later, from the 4th century AD, the island was part of the Byzantine Empire. A most significant event occurred in the period 886-912 AD, when Kefalonia was appointed as the seat of the provincial government of Ionian Islands. The Byzantine era ended in the 11th century when the island fell under the Frankish rule. It was then successively conquered by Normans, Orsinis, Andegans, and Toccans. In 1479 the Ottomans occupied Kefalonia for a short period and in 1500 it was conquered by the Venetians, who ruled for about 300 years. The Venetian Rule ended in 1797, when the Treaty of Campoformido broke up the Venetian Republic and transferred the sovereignty of the Ionian Islands over to the French. The French were later defeated by the allied fleet of the Russians, the Turks and the English. The Ionian State (also called Septinsular Republic) was founded in Constantinople in 1800 and was under the supervision of the Sultan. After the Treaty of Paris, in 1809, the Ionian Islands came under the rule of the English and the "United States of the Ionian Islands" was established. Its inhabitants helped the Greek Revolution for Independence of 1821 against the Ottomans and Kefalonia was finally united to the rest of Greece in 1864.



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Day 6

departure from:

Fiskardo port, Kefalonia

swimming stop

Koutsoupia, Kefalonia

overnight:

Zakinthos (Zante) port



Zakinthos (Zante) is the southernmost of the Ionian islands. The island is very fertile and its agricultural production is important. The Venetians (1485-1797) called the island "Fior di Levante" (flower of the East) as there are over 7000 species of flowers on the island. Zakynthos is a popular tourist destination because of its untouched natural environment and amazing golden sandy beaches. It is also famous as the reproduction area of the endangered sea turtle *Caretta caretta*. Because of this, many beaches on the island have been declared protected areas and have kept their natural beauty, while others have become lively tourist resorts. Zakynthos has been inhabited since Neolithic Times as archaeological excavations have proven. Homer first mentioned the island in the Iliad and the Odyssey, stating that the first inhabitants were the son of King Dardanos of Troy called Zakynthos and his men and that they first came on the island around 1500-1600 BC. Later on the island was conquered by Arkisios, the king of Kefalonia, then by Ulysses, son of Laertis who was the king of Ithaki. Under the King of Ithaki, Zakynthos joined the expedition against Troy. In the 5th century, during the Persian Wars, Zakynthos remained neutral and during the Peloponnesian War it took part in the Athenian Alliance. When the Alliance was dissolved after the Athenian defeat in the expedition against Sicily, Zakynthos came under the Lacedaemonian rule (Sparta). After the Macedonian Wars, Zakynthos fell under Macedonian rule and later was occupied by the Romans. During the Byzantine Times, Constantine the Great included Zakynthos in the province of Illyria. At the end of the 12th century, with the progressive decline of the Byzantine empire, the island became a possession of the Orsini family of French counts, later of the Angevins (the kings of Naples) and finally in 1357 of the Tocchi (Florentine princes). Zakynthos was occupied by the Venetians in 1485, then in 1797 the French conquered the island till 1798 when a joint Russo-Turkish fleet besieged the island. Zakynthos was the titular capital of The Ionian State (also called Septinsular Republic) founded in Constantinople in 1800 by Russia and Turkey. In 1807 French troops occupy the island again, but two years later, in 1809, the British Navy conquered Zakynthos who incorporate it into what they called the "United States of the Ionian Islands". With a base in free Zakynthos, the "Philiki Eteria" (a secret patriotic society) promoted the rebellion against the Ottomans in the 1821 Revolution for Independence. In 1864 Zakynthos was reunited with Greece.



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Day 7

departure from:

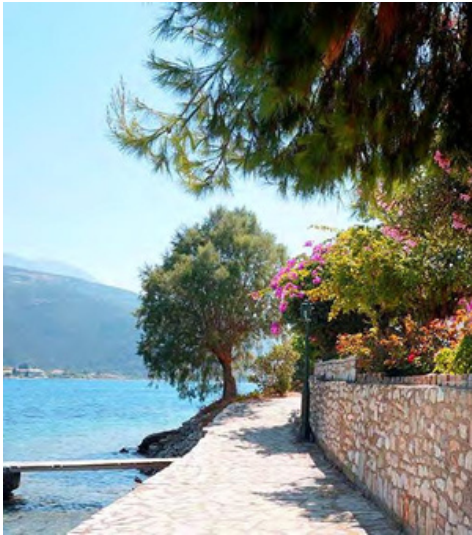
Zakinthos (Zante)

swimming stop:

port Keri, Zakynthos

overnight:

Trizonia, Corinthian gulf



Trizonia Island is a truly inspiring place and one of the last of its kind. It is the only inhabited island in the entire Gulf of Corinth. Around Trizonia there are three other islands that are not inhabited. The origin of the name of the island is unknown. According to a view, the name derives from a small insect cricket (in Greek trizoni). In accordance with another view the name derives from corruption of name "trionisia" that means three islands (because the small group of islands comprises of three main islands). It is said that the infamous Greek shipping tycoon Aristoteles Onassis made a failed bid to acquire the island in the 1960s. No cars or motor bikes are allowed on the island and it has a beautiful natural harbor with a marina for boats and luxury yachts. The island's picturesque flora and fauna and its magnificent hilly landscape dotted with olive trees and grape-vines encourage for exploration, while several beautiful beaches and the uninhabited nearby islets invite for a fantastic swimming experience in crystal-clear waters. The idyllic village centre adjoining the island's small fishing port invites to spend a perfect evening in a magical and child-friendly atmosphere, while numerous excellent "tavernas" and bars offer traditional Greek dishes, fresh seafood, and refreshing drinks in good company.



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Day 8

departure from:

Trizonia, Corinthian gulf

Corinth Canal crossing

disembarkation

Marina Zeas Athens

The Corinth Canal is a waterway that crosses the narrow isthmus of Corinth to link the Corinthian Gulf to the Saronic Gulf. It is believed that Periander, the tyrant of Corinth (602 BC), was the first to conceive of the idea of digging the Corinth Canal. As the project was too complicated given the limited technical capabilities of the times, Periander constructed the "diolkos", a stone road which allowed ships to be transferred on wheeled platforms. Later on, Macedonian king Dimitrios Poliorkitis (300 BC) tried to dig the canal, but his team of engineers warned him that if a connection between the seas were made, the Adriatic would flood the Aegean. This same belief also stopped dictator Julius Caesar and emperors Hadrian and Caligula. It was only in 67 AD that Emperor Nero attempted the construction of the canal with a group of 6000 slaves. But he was murdered before the plans were finalized. Much later, in the 1830s, Kapodistrias, the newly appointed governor of Greece after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, was the first to reconsider the idea of the canal. However, at an estimated cost of 40 million French francs, the project was too expensive for the newly established state. It was only in 1869 that the Parliament authorized the government to allow a private company, headed by Austrian General Etienne Tyrr, to build the Canal of Corinth. Work began in 1882, but the Austrian company's budget was insufficient. So the project was paused, with it restarting in 1890 by a Greek company with a capital of five million francs. This time, the job was completed, and the canal was used for the first time on October 28, 1893.

