

Cephalonia

Ionian Islands · Greece

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Kefalonia is the largest island in the Ionian Sea. Steep limestone mountains, long coastlines and quiet villages make it a good choice for travelers who like scenery, swimming and slow road trips. It is spread out, so most visitors stay in two or three bases, such as Argostoli, Sami or Fiskardo, and travel by car.

Most towns were rebuilt after the 1953 earthquake, so they look modern. The main exception is Fiskardo in the north, which kept its older Venetian-style houses. Assos also keeps an old village feel. The island is also known from the novel and film *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*. A stay of five to seven nights lets you see the caves, the famous beaches and the north.

Greek National Tourism Organisation: Kefalonia

When to visit

May, June and September are the best months for beaches, hiking and sightseeing. July and August are the hottest and busiest months. Winter is the wettest season, and many seasonal hotels and tavernas close.

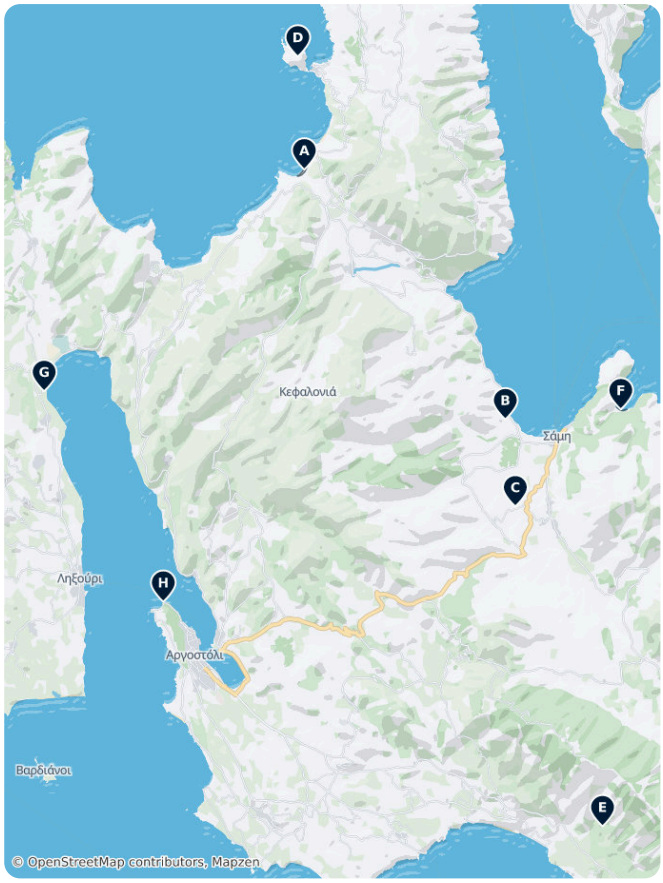
The biggest event is the feast of Saint Gerasimos, the island's patron saint. It is held on 16 August, with a second feast on 20 October. Processions and church services take place at his monastery near Omala.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for hiking	10° / 13° Feels like 5°	8° / 3°	14 rainy days · Dry air
February	Fair Fair for hiking	10° / 13° Feels like 5°	7° / 3°	12 rainy days · Dry air
March	Good Good for hiking	11° / 14° Feels like 7°	9° / 5°	Dry air
April	Great Great for hiking	14° / 17° Feels like 10°	11° / 8°	Dry air
May	Great Great for hiking	18° / 21°	14° / 12°	21 sunny days · Dry air
June	Great Great for sightseeing	22° / 26°	18° / 15°	26 sunny days · UV 8 (Very high)
July	Great Great for sightseeing	24° / 28°	20° / 18°	30 sunny days · Humid air · UV 9 (Very high)
August	Great Great for watersports	25° / 29°	21° / 19°	28 sunny days · Humid air
September	Great Great for sightseeing	22° / 25°	19° / 17°	20 sunny days
October	Great Great for hiking	19° / 22°	16° / 12°	Dry air
November	Good Good for hiking	15° / 19° Feels like 11°	13° / 9°	13 rainy days · Dry air
December	Fair Fair for hiking	12° / 15° Feels like 7°	9° / 4°	15 rainy days · Dry air

Best months: May, June, July, August, September

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Top sights



- A Myrtos Beach is a long white pebble beach below steep cliffs. The sea is turquoise, and the waves can be strong, so swim with care.
- B Melissani Cave is an underground lake that you visit by small boat. The cave roof has opened, so daylight reaches the water.
- C Drogarati Cave is a deep cave near Sami with large rock formations. Its big chamber is known for its sound.
- D Assos Fortress is a Venetian fortress on a hill above the village of Assos. A path leads up from the village, and the views over the coast are wide.
- E Ainos National Park covers the island's highest mountain. It is home to the rare Cephalonian fir and is the best area for hiking.
- F Antisamos Beach is a pebble beach with clear water near Sami. It is easy to combine with the caves.
- G Petani Beach is a quiet beach on the Paliki peninsula, west of the Argostoli bay. Come here for a calmer day by the sea.
- H Katavothres Sea Mills are the Katavothres sinkholes near Argostoli. Sea water flows into the rock here and comes out on the other side of the island.

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What to experience

- Look for loggerhead sea turtles in the harbor of Argostoli. They come close to the waterfront.
- Take the ferry across the bay from Argostoli to Lixouri for the ride and the sea views.
- Join the church celebrations for Saint Gerasimos on 16 August or 20 October.
- Go snorkeling or sea kayaking along the clear northwest coast in summer.

Day trips

The best day trips are by ferry to nearby islands. Ithaca is the easiest.

- **Ithaca**: A short ferry crosses from Sami, about 30 minutes each way. It runs daily in summer and rarely in winter. The island is quiet, green and has pretty harbor villages.
- **Zakynthos**: A seasonal summer ferry runs from the south of Kefalonia. Allow about 1.5 to 2 hours each way. Sailings are few and mostly in the morning, so check the timetable first. A full day trip is hard.
- **Lefkada**: A seasonal ferry links Fiskardo with Lefkada. Check the timetable before you plan the day.

Where to explore

Other Ionian islands are easy to add to a longer trip.

- **To the south**: Zakynthos is known for its beaches and sea caves.
- **To the north**: Lefkada is joined to the mainland by a short bridge. It has long beaches and good wind for sailing.
- **Further north**: Corfu and Paxos suit a separate trip.

Getting there

- **By air**: Kefalonia Island International Airport is about 10 km south of Argostoli. Many European airlines fly here in summer. Taxis and rental cars are the main ways to reach your hotel.
- **By ferry from the mainland**: Ferries link Sami with Patras and Poros with Kyllini. Both routes suit travelers who drive or arrive from Athens by road.
- **By ferry from other islands**: Sami has a link to Ithaca, and Fiskardo has links to Lefkada and Ithaca. Services change by season.
- **Inside the island**: A ferry crosses the Argostoli bay to Lixouri every hour in winter and more often in summer.

Getting around

- **Public transport**: Buses connect Argostoli with the main towns, but services are limited and few reach the beaches. Check the timetable in advance, especially outside summer.
- **Taxis**: Taxis are useful for short trips and airport transfers. Agree the price before you leave on long rides.
- **On foot and by bike**: Argostoli and Fiskardo are easy to explore on foot. The rest of the island is hilly and spread out, so cycling is hard for most visitors.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

Low

Argostoli and Fiskardo are easy on foot. Sights and beaches elsewhere are far apart.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Low

The island is hilly and distances are long, so cycling suits only keen riders.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: Yes. A car is the best way to see the island because the sights and beaches are far apart and buses are limited.
- **Roads**: Many roads are narrow and winding. Allow extra time for narrow mountain roads and tight bends.
- **Parking**: Parking at busy beaches such as Myrtos is limited and fills early in July and August. Arrive in the morning.

Food & drink

Look for the Kefalonian meat pie and local cheeses. Robola, a dry white wine from the slopes of Mount Ainos, is the island's signature wine.

For a meal, go to the harbor front of Fiskardo or the waterfront of Assos. In Argostoli, the streets around the main square have many tavernas.

What to eat & drink

LUNCH

Dolmades · Ντολμάδες
Vine leaves stuffed with rice and herbs, sometimes with minced meat, served warm or cold.

Greek Salad · Χωριάτικη σαλάτα
Tomato, cucumber, onion, olives, and a block of feta cheese, dressed with olive oil.

DINNER

Moussaka · Μουσακάς
A baked layered dish of eggplant, potato, and minced meat topped with béchamel sauce.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Souvlaki · Σουβλάκι
Grilled skewered meat, often served in a pita wrap with tomato, onion, and tzatziki.

Gyros · Γύρος
Spit-roasted meat sliced and wrapped in pita with fries, tomato, onion, and tzatziki.

Spanakopita · Σπανακόπιτα
A savory pastry filled with spinach and feta cheese, wrapped in flaky phyllo dough.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Baklava · Μπακλαβάς
Layers of phyllo pastry filled with chopped nuts and soaked in honey syrup.

DRINKS

Greek Coffee · Ελληνικός καφές
Thick, unfiltered coffee traditionally served in a small cup, often with a glass of water.

Ouzo · Ούζο
An anise-flavored aperitif, usually served with ice and small plates (mezedes).

Retsina · Ρετσίνα
A distinctive resin-flavored white wine, a Greek tradition dating back centuries.

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Safety & health

Kefalonia is safe for visitors. Petty theft is rare, but keep valuables out of sight in parked cars.

- **Sea**: Some beaches, such as Myrtos, have strong waves and currents. Follow local advice before you swim.
- **Summer heat and fire**: Dry hills can burn in summer. Avoid open flames and follow local fire warnings.
- **Earthquakes**: The island is in an active earthquake zone. Serious events are rare.
- **Water**: Many visitors prefer bottled water for drinking, because tap water can taste of salt.

History

The island was ruled by Venice from 1500 to 1797. In Assos, the Venetian fortress Assos Fortress still stands above the village. The earlier capital was the Castle of Saint George, on a hill above Peratata in the south.

In 1813, during British rule, Colonel *Charles Philip de Bosset* built a causeway across the Argostoli lagoon. De Bosset Bridge Obelisk stands on it.

In September 1943, German forces killed thousands of Italian soldiers of the Acqui Division after they surrendered. Acqui Division Memorial remembers them.

On 12 August 1953, a strong earthquake destroyed almost every house on the island. Fiskardo was one of the few places to survive. This is why most towns were rebuilt.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Greece at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY

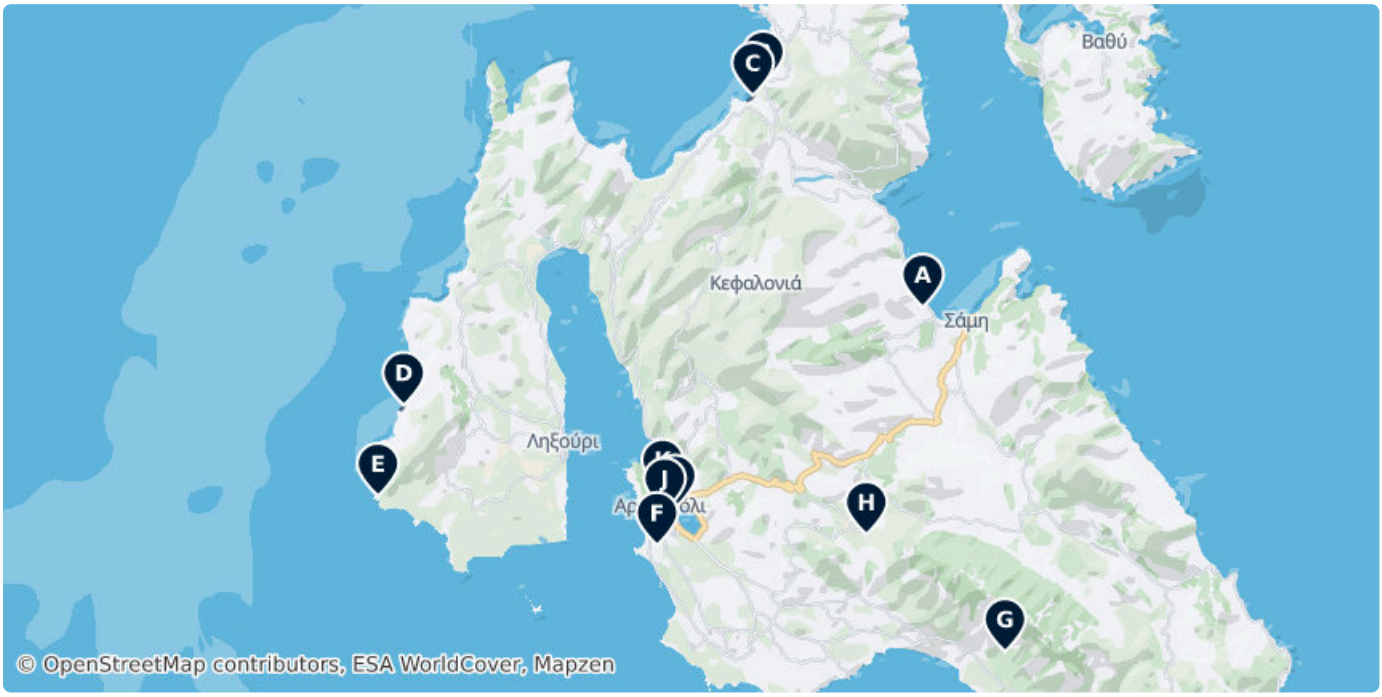
Type C / Type F
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
Greek

TAP WATER
Use caution

Cephalonia's Crown Jewels

Cephalonia’s diverse geography ranges from the 1,628-meter peaks of Ainos National Park to the subterranean Melissani Lake. This selection highlights the island’s geological landmarks, including the white pebble shores of Myrtos Beach and the remote limestone cliffs of Platia Ammos. Cultural sites feature the 19th-century De Bosset Bridge in Argostoli and the 16th-century hermitage of Saint Gerasimos. The list also includes the Paliki peninsula’s Gerokompos lighthouse and the Robola winery, which produces wine from the island’s indigenous white grape variety.





A Melissani Cave

Melissani Cave or Melissani Lake, also Melisani is a cave located on the island of Kefalonia, northwest of Sami, about 5 km Southeast of...

Καραβόμυλος 28080, Greece (38.25705, 20.62404)

Mo–Su 09:00–17:00

B View to Myrtos Bay

Roadside lookout point offering a panoramic perspective of the white pebble beach and turquoise Ionian waters from approximately 300 meters above sea level.

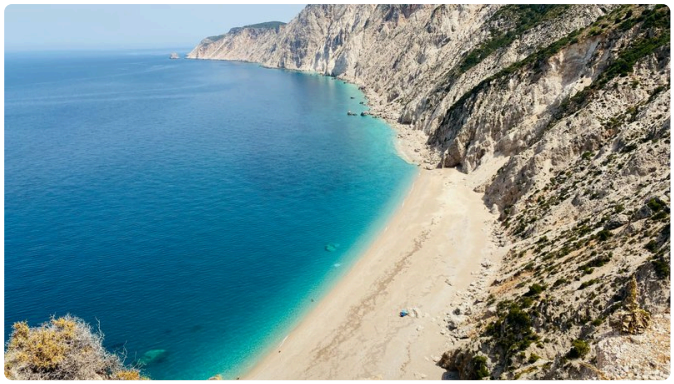
(38.34763, 20.54141)



C Myrtos Beach

Situated between the feet of two mountains, Agia Dynati and Kalon Oros, this beach is characterized by its semi-circular shape, steep limestone cliffs, and white cobbles.

28081, Greece (38.34312, 20.53593)



D Platia Ammos

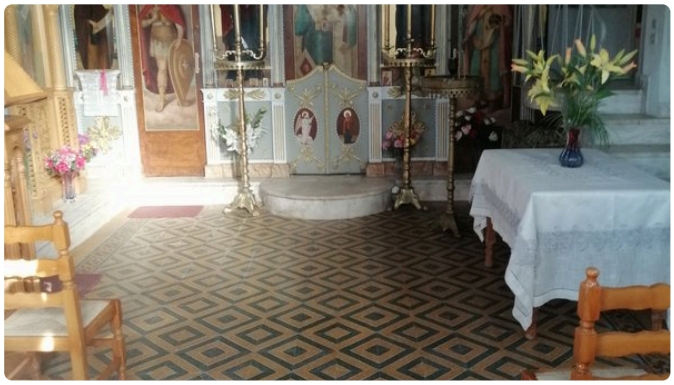
A secluded beach on the Paliki peninsula surrounded by steep cliffs. Formerly accessible by 400 steps, it is now primarily reached by boat due to earthquake damage.

28200, Greece (38.21703, 20.35495)

E Gerokompos

A 13-meter tall lighthouse located on the southwestern edge of the Paliki peninsula. Originally constructed in 1906, it was rebuilt following the 1953 earthquake.

28200, Greece (38.18008, 20.34158)



F Cave-Hermitage St. Gerasimos

A small cave and chapel where Saint Gerasimos, the patron saint of Kefalonia, lived as a hermit for six years during the mid-16th century.

Σπηλαίου Αγίου Γερασίμου, 28100, Greece (38.15999, 20.48628)



G Ainos National Park

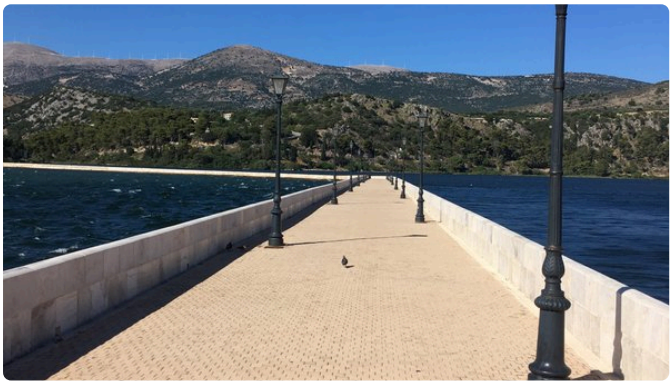
Mount Aenos or Ainos is the tallest mountain on the Ionian island of Cephalonia, Greece, with an elevation of 1,628 metres.

28100, Greece (38.11667, 20.66667)

H Robola winery

Home to the Kefalonian Robola Wine Cooperative, this facility processes the island's indigenous white Robola grapes grown in the high-altitude Omala Valley.

(38.16439, 20.59482)



I De Bosset Bridge Obelisk

Built in 1813 by the British Governor Charles Philippe de Bosset, this 689-meter stone bridge spans the Koutavos Lagoon and is the longest of its kind over sea.

Γέφυρα, Greece (38.17523, 20.49570)

J The Bell Tower Square (St. Marco or Liberty Square)

A historic square in Argostoli where the 'Libro d'Oro' was burned in 1797, signaling the end of the Venetian nobility's reign on the island.

Παναγή Βινιεράτου, 281 00 Argostoli, Greece (38.17401, 20.49024)

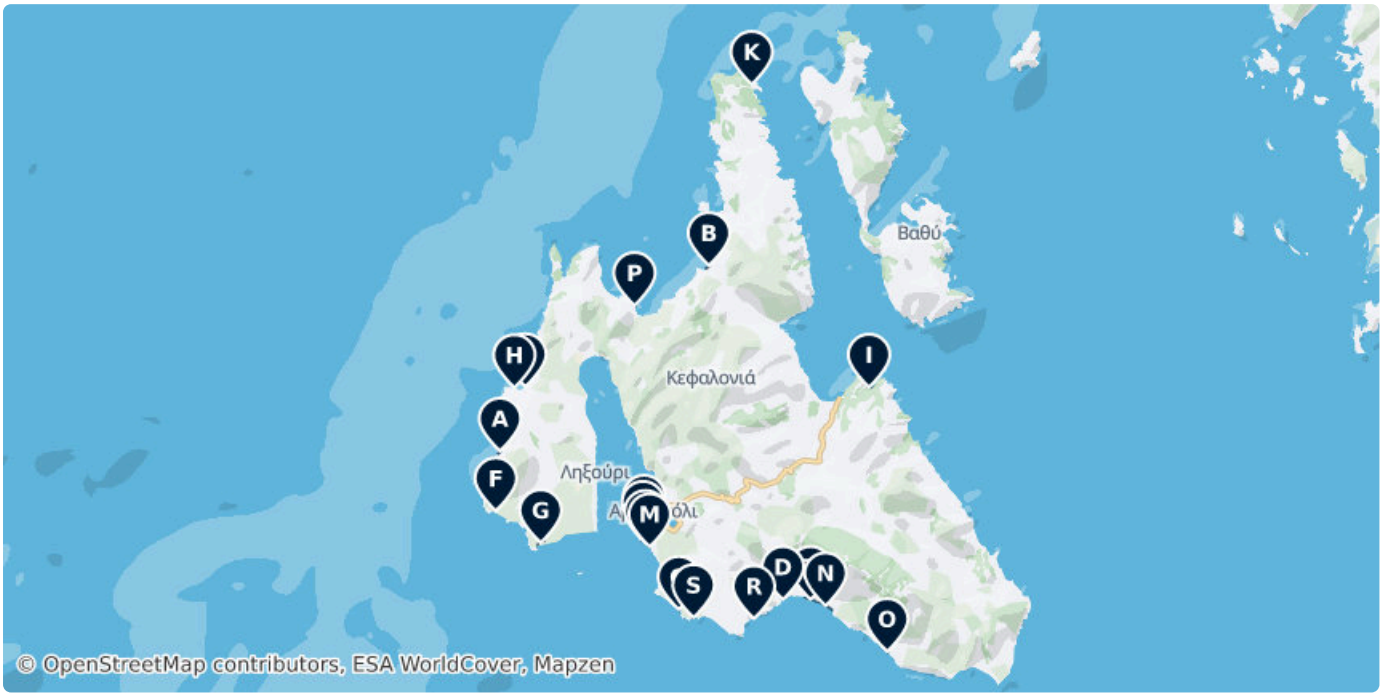
K Argostoli

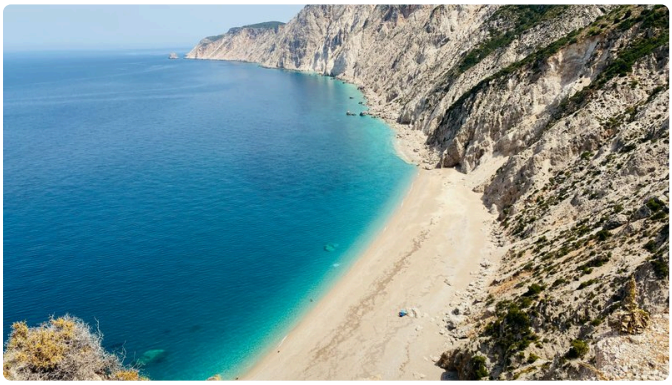
The island's capital and main port, featuring a waterfront promenade where loggerhead sea turtles (Caretta-caretta) are frequently sighted near the fishing boats.

(38.18158, 20.48918)

Top Beaches

Cephalonia's coastline offers a diverse range of landscapes, from the iconic white pebbles and turquoise waters of Myrtos to the unique reddish sands of the Paliki peninsula. The island features geological curiosities like the moving rock at Kounopetra and vital ecological sites such as the turtle nesting grounds at Koroni. Whether exploring the sheltered coves of Lassi or the rugged limestone cliffs of the west coast, these beaches showcase the island's distinct Mediterranean geography.





A Platia Ammos

A remote west-coast beach on the Paliki peninsula. Formerly reached by 280 steps, it is now primarily accessible by boat due to earthquake damage.

28200, Greece (38.21703, 20.35495)



B Myrtos Beach

Situated between the feet of two mountains, Agia Dynati and Kalon Oros, this beach is characterized by white cobblestones and electric blue waters.

28081, Greece (38.34312, 20.53593)

C Gradakia

A small sandy cove in the Lassi region featuring shallow waters and distinctive volcanic rock formations.

Παραλίας Γραδακιά, 28100, Greece (38.16453, 20.47984)

D Agios Thomas Beach

Consists of two small sandy bays near Karavados, featuring flat rock platforms ideal for diving into the clear water.

(Unnamed Road), 28100, Greece (38.11593, 20.60005)

E Paliostaphida

A sheltered sandy beach in Lassi surrounded by pine trees and Mediterranean greenery.

Greece (38.16039, 20.47887)

F Lankadakia

A pebble beach on the Paliki peninsula known for its deep, clear waters and underwater rock formations.

(Unnamed Road), 28200, Greece (38.17636, 20.35123)

G Kounopetra

Named after a "moving rock" geological phenomenon, this beach features unique reddish sand and shallow water.

Greece (38.15462, 20.39009)

H Agia Elene

A secluded west-facing beach on the Paliki peninsula, known for its clear waters and sunset views.

(Unnamed Road), 28200, Greece (38.26021, 20.36741)

I Antisamos

A wide pebble beach surrounded by lush green hills. It served as a primary filming location for the movie Captain Corelli's Mandolin.

(38.26050, 20.67470)



J Petani Beach

Located on the Paliki peninsula, this beach features white pebbles, turquoise water, and steep limestone cliffs.

28200, Greece (38.26086, 20.37676)

K Emblisi Beach

A pebble beach near Fiskardo with white limestone slabs and calm, emerald waters.

(Unnamed Road), Φισκάρδο 28084, Greece (38.46618, 20.57306)

L Makris Gialos Beach

A long, wide sandy beach in the Lassi area known for its golden sand and clear, shallow waters.

281 00 Lassi, Greece (38.15413, 20.48102)

M Platis Gialos Beach

A sandy beach adjacent to Makris Gialos, separated by a small rocky outcrop.

281 00 Lassi, Greece (38.15184, 20.48458)

N Lourdas Beach

A long stretch of sand and pebbles located at the foot of Mount Ainos, the island's highest peak.

(38.11171, 20.63695)

O Koroni Beach

A secluded sandy beach near Skala that serves as a nesting ground for the endangered Caretta caretta sea turtles.

28086, Greece (38.08044, 20.69048)

P Vouti

A small, quiet cove near the village of Zola, featuring a mix of sand and pebbles with bright blue water.

(Unnamed Road), 28100, Greece (38.31607, 20.47152)

Q Amnes Beach

A sandy beach located near the airport, characterized by shallow waters and fine golden sand.

(Unnamed Road), 28100, Greece (38.10924, 20.50991)

R Σπαρτιάς

A narrow sandy beach enclosed by steep limestone cliffs near the village of Spartia.

Kountourata, 280 83 Pesada, Greece (38.10290, 20.57503)

S Ai helis beach

A beach with fine greyish sand and shallow water, accessible via a long flight of stairs near Svoronata.

(38.10365, 20.52264)

T Kanali naturist beach

A quiet, narrow sandy beach located near Lourdas, accessible via a steep downhill path.

(38.11599, 20.62412)

Historic Ruins and Castles

Cephalonia's history spans from the Mycenaean era to Venetian rule, evidenced by the island's diverse archaeological sites. This collection includes the expansive 16th-century Assos Fortress and the Mycenaean Cemetery of Mazarakata, the largest of its kind in the Ionian Islands. Highlights include 3rd-century Roman mosaics in Skala, the massive Cyclopean walls of the ancient Krani citadel at Paliokastro, and the ruins of Old Skala, a village abandoned after the 1953 earthquake. Scattered Venetian watchtowers and Byzantine basilicas further illustrate the island's strategic maritime past.



A Komis Tsatsis

Remnants of a small historic fortification.

(Unnamed Road), Κομιτάτα 28084, Greece
(38.35541, 20.59830)



B Assos Fortress

The Assos Castle is a Venetian fortification on Cephalonia island in western Greece.

Tourist path, 280 85 Erisos Municipal Unit, Greece
(38.38199, 20.53307)

C Mycenean Cemetery of Mazarakata

The largest Mycenaean cemetery in the Ionian Islands, featuring seventeen rock-cut chamber tombs dating from the 14th to 11th centuries BC.

(38.13012, 20.54454)

D Skala Roman Villa and Mosaics

Remains of a 3rd-century AD Roman farmhouse featuring four rooms with well-preserved floor mosaics depicting mythological scenes and geometric patterns.

Σκάλα 28086, Greece (38.07156, 20.79835)

Tu–Su 08:30–15:30

E Old Monastary Sissia

Ruins of a 13th-century monastery, traditionally said to be founded by Saint Francis of Assisi, located on a hillside overlooking the sea.

(Unnamed Road), 28100, Greece (38.09952, 20.65735)

F Old monastery of Virgin Mary Lamia

Historic monastery ruins located on the slopes of the mountain near Dilinata.

(38.22745, 20.50317)

G Basilica of Fiscardo

Ruins of a 6th-century three-aisled basilica located near Fiskardo, featuring architectural remnants of the early Christian period.

28084, Greece (38.46246, 20.58055)

H Roman Cemetery

Archaeological site in Fiskardo featuring rock-cut tombs and sarcophagi dating from the Roman occupation of the island.

(Unnamed Road), Φισκάρδο 28084, Greece (38.45941, 20.57775)

I Guardhouse

Ruins of a Venetian-era defensive structure located within the Assos Fortress complex.

28084, Greece (38.38178, 20.53379)

J Paliokastro Citadel

Site of the ancient city of Krani, featuring massive 7th-century BC Cyclopean walls and remnants of a Doric temple dedicated to Demeter.

28080, Greece (38.25412, 20.66056)

K Old Skala

The original village of Skala, abandoned following the 1953 earthquake, where stone house foundations and church ruins remain visible.

(38.07987, 20.78007)

L Windmill

Ruins of a traditional stone windmill located on the northern coast near Fiskardo.

28084, Greece (38.45541, 20.56587)

M Throni

Archaeological site near Fiskardo featuring a rock-cut throne and an ancient burial chamber.

(Unnamed Road), 28084, Greece (38.45981, 20.57049)

N Kasteli of Paliki

Remains of a medieval fortification located on the Paliki peninsula.

(38.30459, 20.44223)

O Vardiola of Koutsoupia

A Venetian-era maritime watchtower used for spotting pirate ships, located on the eastern coast near Koutsoupia beach.

(38.22557, 20.71124)

P Vardiola at Piniatoros' property

Stone ruins of a Venetian coastal watchtower used for maritime surveillance.

(38.17862, 20.47621)

Q Assos Fortress

Venetian-era watchtower located in the Atheras region, part of the island's historical coastal defense network.

Atheras, 282 00 Paliki Municipal Unit, Greece (38.33842, 20.40883)

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