

## Yacht Charter Greece; a tour through the Historical Ionian Islands

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Sailors have been coming to the Ionian Islands on the Western coast of Greece for thousands of years; around 1500BC the Myceneans arrived, followed by the Romans, the Byzantines, the Venetians and the British. All have left their mark here. The islands were reclaimed by Greece in 1863 and remain so to this day, but traces of the islands' fascinating history remain in both the culture and the architecture their conquerors left behind. The area has also inspired its fair share of literature: Ithaca is said to be the home of Odysseus, hero of Homer's *Odyssey* whilst Kefalonia is the setting for Louis de Bernières' novel, *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*.

For those who wish to follow in the footsteps of the ancient adventurers, the Ionian has much to offer the modern yacht charter sailor. In the north, Corfu is a busy, bustling island with a distinct English flavor, a legacy of British rule. Further south, Lefkada, Ithaca, Kefalonia and Zakynthos create a fantastic sailing area, appropriately named the 'inland sea' with flat water and predictable winds. The wind usually picks up around midday, and blows until early evening, before the calm descends again for the night. The wooded islands slope steeply down to sparkling clear water, with plenty of beautiful sheltered bays for a lunch stop and a swim; evenings are usually spent moored stern to "Mediterranean style" in one of the islands' small villages. Sitting back with a cool drink and watching the evening parking show (whilst breathing a secret sigh of relief that you are already safely tied up), is always entertaining, before dining in a local taverna. Greek food features the best of The Med: fresh fish, shellfish, olives, tomatoes, Greek yogurt and honey. Much of the Ionian can only be reached by sea, and so is still unspoiled. Destinations to visit range from villages with a population of a few hundred, such as Fiskardho on Kefalonia, with the brightly colored houses and bustling, nautical feel, to bays with just one tavern, accessible only by yacht. Cosmopolitan the area is not, but for those who wish to relax and enjoy the unhurried rural island life, The Ionian is the ideal place to sail and relax.