

The gods Artemis and Apollo chose it for their own holidays.

For its idyllic green landscapes,
for its excellent beaches, its clear blue water,
and its seaside caves.
For its magic sunsets and its mild climate.

You too will enjoy Zakynthos today
for the same reasons, but also its serenades,
its hospitable environment, and its culture.
These holidays will be engraved forever
in your memory and will have the perfume of jasmine.

An island with a rich past

The oldest traces of life that were found in the island come from the Neolithic age, and were located in the Bay of Laganas. The history of the island has its roots in antiquity: according to Pliny, the island was inhabited before 3000 B.C. and was named Yria. Near the fortress, a marble complex of divine figures was found, such as those of Apollo, Aphrodite, and Artemis, which is now located in the Tiepolo Museum in Venice. This also certifies the particular penchant of the ancient inhabitants of the island for music and the worship of Artemis.

The island received the name of Zakynthos, as Homer mentions, from Zakynthos, son of King Dardanos of Troy. Zakynthos reached the island from the Arcadian town of Psofida around 1500 B.C. and gave his name to the new city-state. The colonists who followed him named the acropolis of the island Psofida in order to remember their homeland. The descendants of Zakynthos created a noteworthy culture and began to found colonies for their expansion, such as Zakantha in Spain, the town of Kydonies in Crete, and Fokida in the Pyrenees of Spain. In the Mycenaean era, the island formed a part of the kingdom of Ithaca. Homer called the island "yliessa", or rich in vegetation.

The geographic location, the fertile soil, and the sources of tar of the island played a significant role in its economic development in the 6th century B.C., with the result that in the 6th century B.C. silver coinage was struck depicting the tripod, a symbol sacred to Apollo, which was followed by the lyre in the 5th century B.C. For approximately seven centuries, the island experienced free democratic life. In 455 B.C. Zakynthos joined the alliance led by the Athenians and after its defeat, was occupied by the Lacedaemonians with the result being a change from its democratic constitution

to an oligarchic one. During the Persian Wars, Zakynthos kept a neutral stance, while during the period of the Roman Empire, it was integrated within the Roman province of Achaia. In parallel, the spread of Christianity began in 34 A.D., according to one version, begun by Mary Magdalene, or by Saint Beatrice, according to another tradition.

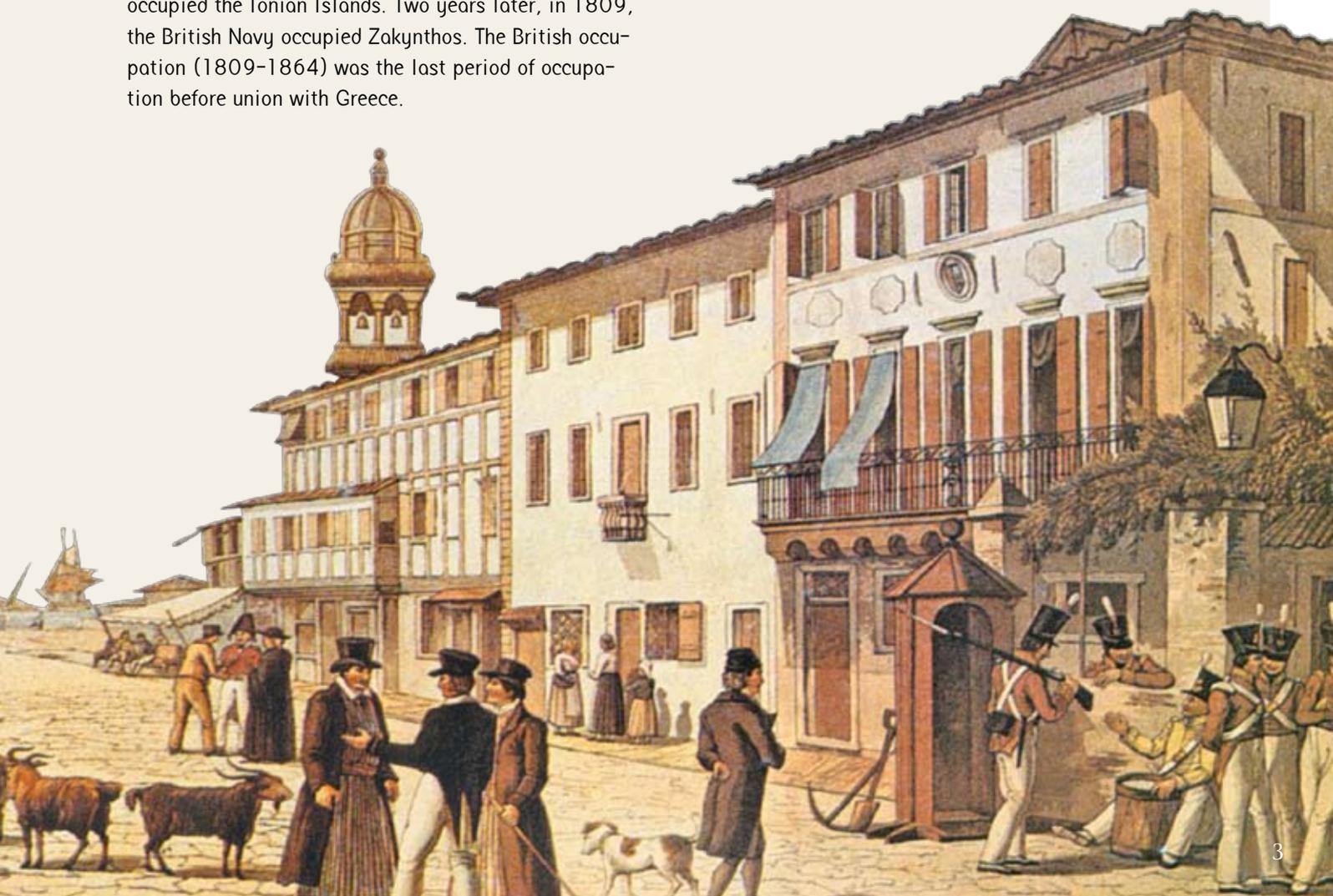
With the founding of the Byzantine Empire, Zakynthos belonged to the province of Illyria, however, without receiving particular care or protection. Thus, it was sacked by incursions of pirates and hopeful conquerors. With the Crusades, the Ionian Islands would undergo new adventures. At the end of the 12th century, the island became a possession of the Orsini family of French counts, and later of the Angevins (the kings of Naples) and finally of the Tocchi (Florentine princes). In 1485, the Venetians occupied the islands after diplomatic pressure directed against the Turks. The Venetian occupation provided Zakynthos with the stability and the opportunity for development that it had been denied for centuries. The peace secured by the power of Venice, for the first time, ensured the possibility of the island flourishing in economic and cultural terms.



The inhabitants were divided into three classes, the nobles (*nobili*), the bourgeoisie (*civili*), and the populace (*popolari*). Only the nobles were registered in the Golden Book (*libro d' oro*) and had political rights. In 1797 the French republicans arrived in Zakynthos and were welcomed with enthusiasm. With an enthusiastic celebration, they burned the *Libro d' oro* in Agios Markos Square. The French occupation lasted 15 months. In 1798, a joint Russo-Turkish fleet, commanded by the Russian Admiral Usakov, arrived in Zakynthos and occupied the island. In 1800 a piece treaty was signed between Russia and Turkey and the founding of an independent state named "The State of the Seven Islands" was decided. The Greek language became official and Orthodox Christianity was established as the official religion. The State of the Seven Islands, which was the first independent Greek state in modern history, lasted for seven years. In 1807 French troops occupied the Ionian Islands. Two years later, in 1809, the British Navy occupied Zakynthos. The British occupation (1809-1864) was the last period of occupation before union with Greece.



With the outbreak of the Greek War for Independence in 1821, the Ionian islanders openly and actively supported the risen Greeks. After their liberation from the Turks and the founding of the Greek state, the demand of union between the Ionian Islands and the rest of Greece was expressed intensely. On May 21, 1864, the Greek flag was definitively raised on the island. During the Second World War, the island was originally occupied by the Italians and later by the Germans. A few years later, in 1953, a destructive earthquake that was followed by an extensive fire razed the town of Zakynthos. Thus, historical buildings and churches were lost, together with the treasures that they contained. The town was rebuilt according to strict earthquake safety regulations, with an effort at the same time to preserve some of its old character.





The statue of Glory personified



The island of music, poetry, and hospitality

Homeland of Dionysios Solomos, our national poet, of Ugo Foscolo and of Xenopoulos, Zakynthos always maintained a very high level of culture and still does.

The Venetian influence mixed with Greek tradition and produced a particular culture with fine nuances and grace. On the island, all the forms of art were cultivated and developed. For this reason, Zakynthos was rightly named the Florence of the East. Music flows in the veins of the people of Zakynthos. Their penchant for this art began from very ancient times, when the god of music, Apollo, was worshipped on the island. During the period of Venetian rule, the art of serenades was cultivated on Zakynthos, and lives on in our time.

The first school of music in Greece was founded as early as 1815 in Zakynthos, which was the birthplace of great musicians that have been recognized internationally. The theatre, with the influence of the Italians, underwent great development on the island already since the 15th century. In 1571 the Persians of Aeschylus were performed on stage for the first time. The satire in the Omilies, a sort of popular revue, was greatly popular among the people, while the opera united the aristocracy and the populace.

Today Zakynthos is one of the most significant cultural centres in Greece. Rare concerts and other noteworthy events are organized on the island every year. The spiritual life of the island was also significant. The first Greek Academy was founded in Zakynthos in then 16th century. The people of Zakynthos of today, who are open-hearted, fun-loving, and hospitable, with an intense temper, show particular leanings towards art and literature.





The physiognomy of the place

Zakynthos is the furthest south of the Ionian Islands and the third in area and population. It is located 8.5 nautical miles south of Kefallonia, 9.5 miles west of the Peloponnese, and approximately 300 kilometers west of the capital of Greece, Athens.

Its geographic location allows travelers to visit the other Ionian Islands as well, or even to travel to the shores of the Peloponnese opposite it, where one can find, among other things, the ancient city of Olympia, where the Olympic Games were held in antiquity. In addition, from Zakynthos, due to its direct transport connection, it is easy to reach the large cities of Greece, Patra, Athens, and Thessaloniki. An island full of contrasts, Zakynthos is mostly mountainous, with low mountains full of pine trees and fertile valleys.

On its northern, eastern, and southern sides, there are countless picturesque beaches, while to the west, on its imposing rocky coasts, many maritime caves have formed, such as the famous Blue Cave in the northwest of the island. The climate of Zakynthos is mild, Mediterranean, with much rain and extensive sunshine, even in the winter. Evidently, it also owes its immemorably abundant vegetation to this, which also justifies its descriptions as “full of vegetation” and “the flower of the Levant” (Flor di Levante) by Homer and the Venetians respectively.

Zakynthos is still an island with abundant agricultural production, mainly based on the cultivation of the olive, citrus fruits, and grapes, producing both raisins and the excellent wines of Zakynthos, with well-developed entrepreneurial activity, mainly in the field of tourism, and with a rich historical tradition, since for many centuries the island was a crossroads of peoples and cultures.



Morathonisi – Keri



Makrys Gialos (a long shore)



Myzithres – Keri





Care for nature

The National Maritime Park of Zakynthos (NMPZ) was founded by a Presidential Decree in December of 1999 and is the first of its type in Greece, administrated by a Managing Entity, and is an example in terms of the application of management measures for the other protected areas of Greece.

The most important goal of the NMPZ is the protection and preservation of the shores where sea turtles lay their eggs, in the Bay of Laganas. Its specific goals include environmental education and information, sensitizing the public concerning nature activities, safeguarding the natural and cultural landscape and developing tourism activities in accordance with the principle of sustainability.

In the area of the National Maritime Park we meet populations of the Mediterranean seal *Monachus monachus*, systems of sand dunes, underwater meadows of *Posidonia oceanica*, and coastal ecosystems with hundreds of types of flora and fauna.



Panagia Skopiotissa



Countryside and beaches

Of the forty-four villages of Zakynthos, most are developed but have maintained their traditional color. Tourism developed gradually and the environmental sensitivity of the inhabitants did not allow huge complexes to drown the beauty of the island.

Here you will find large, medium-sized, and small hotels that offer not only modern comfort, but also service that becomes authentic hospitality.

Agios Sostis



Argasi – Gerakas, Porto Roma

Starting from the seaside boulevard and heading in the direction of Agios Dionysios, at a distance of 4 km we meet the verdant Argasi, with its boundless sands and its clear sea. It is one of the most worldly areas of Zakynthos, providing a note of intense and lively nightlife. Around the area there are old churches and the ruins of a medieval tower, while the path leading to the peak of Skopos, where, according to mythology, Artemis, the goddess of the hunt, lived, starts out from there. There was a temple of Artemis at its peak, in whose place the monastery of Panagia Skopiotissa has been built.

Returning to the coastal road and passing through the picturesque Xirokastello, a dirt road to the right leads to the unique beaches of Sekania and Dafni. These beaches constitute the most important areas of reproduction of the sea turtle *Caretta - Caretta* and for this reason all the measures for protection of the sea turtles are in force. Continuing in our original direction, and at a distance of 11 km from the town of Zakynthos, we meet the picturesque beach of Porto Zoro with the cliffs at its extreme right. The left end, which was recently renamed Rock with Flowers, is enclosed by picturesque tavernas and rooms for rent. A few kilometers further away there is the shallow beach of Banana, which is considered one of the best and the most beautiful beaches of the island, since white sea carnations grow in its sand, providing an exotic picture.

Leaving Vasiliko, we arrive at the beach of Gerakas, which is located at the eastern extreme of Laganas Bay and also constitutes one of the reproduction sites for the sea turtle *Caretta - Caretta*. Southwest of Gerakas we find the privately owned island of Pelouzo, where we find ruins of the monastery that used to exist there at one time. At the end of this route, we meet Porto Roma, a very picturesque promontory with excellent sand, clean water, and a small harbor for small boats, which is recommended for the lovers of sailing.





Kalamaki



Zakynthos - Kalamaki - Laganas – The Beach of Limni Keriou - Marathonisi Keri - Agalas

Following the road that leads to the airport, at a distance of 8 km we find Kalamaki, one more tourist area of Zakynthos. The wide beach, with the tall cliffs at its edge, is covered with sand dunes or ammokouloumoi, as the people of Zakynthos call them. Sea carnations grow in this sand, providing the entire area with an exotic note. To the left of the beach there are impressive gypsum cliffs, known as the Gypsolithoi or Ypsolithoi.

Immediately afterwards, the road leads to the most important tourist resort of the island, Laganas, with one of the largest beaches in Greece, with a length of 9 km. It is one of the most populated and frequented areas of Zakynthos. Afterwards, we meet the beautiful beach of Agios Sostis and the beach of Porto Koukla, where the vegetation literally touches the light blue water.



We should not forget that the Bay of Laganas is subject to protective measures for the Caretta - Caretta. The beauty that gushes forth as you look at the beach is unique; it is no coincidence that the turtles prefer Laganas for their reproduction.

Leaving the Bay of Laganas, we head west, towards the interior of the island, to Lithakia, where with a deviation of 5 km in the direction of Agalas, after passing through the village with its picturesque stone houses, the road leads to the cave of Damianos. Furthermore, on the mountain, above the gorge of Avyssos there is the so-called "Human Cave", which, as it is said, was made into a grave for 150 people by pirates.





Marathonisi



Marathia - Keri



On the road to Keri we meet the beach of Limni Keriou. This is the coastal settlement with the most beautiful and picturesque beach in Zakynthos, opposite the enchanting Marathonisi. The picturesque small harbour of Limni Keriou is the famous harbor of ancient Zakynthos, known to all in antiquity, which constituted a noteworthy commercial port for the entire island.

In the same area there is also “the spring of Herodotus”, known since antiquity, with water that gushes out from the earth even today. From here, the ships and fishing boats set out for the brief enjoyable cruises to visit the long-living sea turtle *Caretta - Caretta*, the beaches of Marathonisi, and the famous blue caves of Keri, with its emerald green water and the amazing Arches of Marathias (the small and the large arch), which consist of arches formed by the cliffs above the sea, under which the small boats pass. At the beach of Marathias, the pebbles and the deep water will charm you, since they offer a distinct sensation of calm and tranquility.



Myzithres – Keri



Panagia Keriotissa

Just 5 km farther on, in a verdant landscape, we find Keri, with its stone houses and narrow alleys, which offers a unique and outstanding view. In the village there is also the noteworthy church of Panagia Keriotissa, with its amazing iconostasis. 1.5 km in the direction of the village, at the edge of a precipice of 200 meters, there is the lighthouse of Keri, with its excellent view of the two huge white cliffs of Megali Myzithra and Mikri Myzithra, which stand out above the sea like pyramids.

From this point you can also admire one of the most famous sunsets of the Ionian Sea. The Ionian Sea spreads before your eyes and the colors of the sunset create a harmonious scene with the abrupt slope and the calm water, red from the reflection. To the southeast there is the deepest point of the Mediterranean basin, the “Well of Oinousses”, with a depth of approximately 4,500 meters.



Keri Lake



Zakynthos - Macherado – Agios Leon - Navagio

Just 10 km west of Zakynthos town we find Macherado, the second largest village in Zakynthos after Katastari. The church of Agia Mavra, in the style of a simple basilica, is impressive, standing out from afar among the cypresses with its Venetian bell tower, whose bells are said to be the most melodious in Greece. The church was destroyed by a large forest fire at the beginning of the year 2006. The work for its restoration has already begun.

To the southwest, as we ascend the mountain we meet the village of Agios Nikolaos or Koiliomeno, at an elevation of 480 meters, where the impressive bell tower of Agios Nikolaos is located, dating from around 1893, as well as traditional houses from the 16th century. Between Koiliomeno and Lagopodo there is the area called “The Garden of the Orchids” by botanists, because of the 42 species of orchids that grow on the island. The vegetation on the island is rich and unique; along our journey the pines, cypresses, the lentisks, the holly oaks, and very many plants and shrubs enchant and impress us.

Leaving Agios Nikolaos behind us and turning to the right, we are heading towards Agios Leon, with a view towards the sea that enchants us. One kilometer before it, there are the mountain villages of Louha and Gyri, which are hidden within the vegetation and whose traditional architecture intensely resembles that of the villages of Mani, possible because its first inhabitants came from the Peloponnese. From Gyri the road leads to the unexplored cave of Chagiotis and to Mavri Spilia. As we reach the village of Agios Leon, we find the church of the same name, an impressive example of unique popular architecture, with the use of the lower part of a windmill as a bell tower.

To the left, at a distance of 3 km, we find Kambi, which is built on the abrupt precipice of Shiza. In the area there is a Mycenaean cemetery with hewn caves. Opposite the coast there is the island of Fokia, which owes its name to the similarity of its shape to that of a seal. The village of Maries, which we meet after Exo Chora, took its name from Mary Magdalene. The view from the peak of Vrachionas, which reaches Kefallonia, is amazing.



Maries



Ypapandi – Macherado

Koiliomeno



Louha





Porto Vromi

Zakynthos - Tsilivi - Alykes – The Blue Cave

Immediately afterwards, the most beautiful point on the island, Navagio, with its famous beach, known to all, is ready to enchant you. This unique landscape, surrounded by rocky white slopes, vegetation, and the abundant sand that leads to the emerald green water of the Ionian Sea, is the ideal place for a romantic journey by night, in spite of the multitude of people that you may meet.

A few kilometers farther away there is the picturesque enclosed promontory of Porto Vromi, where we recommend that you rent a pedal boat or a boat in order to explore the surrounding caves. There are boats that travel from the small harbor to the beach of Navagio; the trip lasts half an hour and the captain makes stops at the caves with deep blue water and white sand for anyone that wants to swim. Do not forget to bring water. Before Navagio there are also other idyllic beaches, which, however, require a boat of your own for a visit.



Xyngia



The Blue Cave

Tsilivi



In the direction of Bochalis, at a distance of 1 km , the road to the right leads to Stranis Hill and afterwards to Akrotiri, an area full of vegetation, where the notables of the island chose to build their country houses. The country house of Dionysios Solomos is found in the same area; together with the other mansions, they constitute architectural treasures from the past. Opposite the shore there is the small island of Vodi, which used to be joined to the land by a small bridge. To the left there is the village of Bochalis with the Fortress, while if we go straight ahead we will meet Tsilivi, one of the most beautiful beaches in Zakynthos, with an outstanding sandy shore that attracts many visitors. After Tsilivi there is the picturesque Planos, an ideal choice for swimming, since its water is crystal clear, shallow, and safe. If we return to the main road towards Alykes, we will meet roads that lead to small beaches and inlets, ready to satisfy ever demanding visitor: Amboula, Palyamos, Drosia, Psarrou, and Ammoudi.

At a distance of 2 km there is the beach of Alikana, where excavations in the wider area of the settlement have brought to light a domed tomb and vases from the Mycenaean period. At the promontory of Agia Kyriaki there is the picturesque beach of the same name with its fine sand, and immediately afterwards, the famous and excellent Alykes.

Alykes' beautiful and extensive beach and shallow sea have classified it among the best of the island. Behind the village there are the salt lakes, which used to form the base of the local economy. The road to the right leads to the village of Orthonies. As we leave and follow the road to the left, we meet Kato and Ano Volimes, which are famous for their excellent woven goods and embroidery. At a distance of 9 km, there is the small harbor of Agios Nikolaos, from which the boats for the Blue Cave start, and there is also a ferry to Kefallonia.

Strofades

Deep in the water of the Ionian Sea, 45 km southwest of Zakynthos town and 78 km west of the promontory of Katakolo in the Peloponnese, two small and isolated islands, the Strofadia, stand out. The ancients called them the "Floating Islands" because they truly seem to float. The larger island is called Stamfani and the smaller one Arpya. The two islets are connected to each other by an underwater isthmus. On Stamfani there is a lighthouse and the monastery of Metamorfofi or of Panagia Pandohara, which was founded during the Byzantine Empire, in 1241. Saint Dionysius, the patron saint of the island of Zakynthos, had been a monk in this monastery. The monastery is impressive and imposing at the same time; it looks like a medieval fortress with walls over 25 meters high, evidently for protection from incursions by pirates.

Alykes

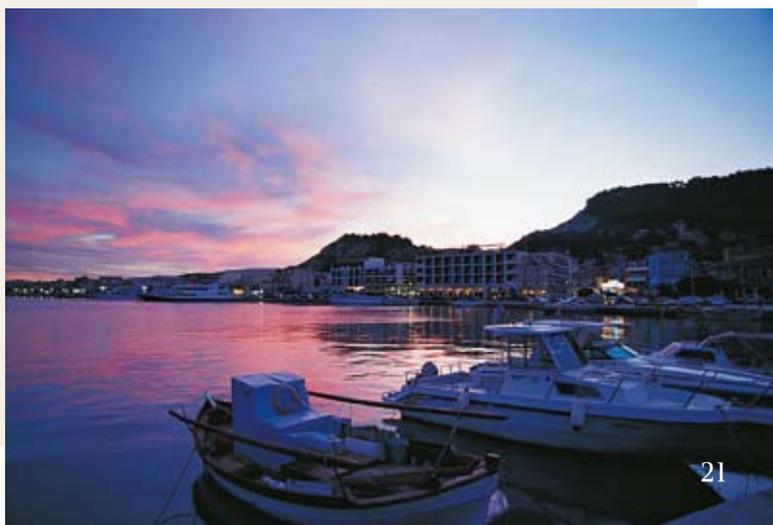


The town of Zakynthos

Capital and port of the island, Zakynthos town spreads at the foot of the hill below the castle. Here, buildings and mansions are preserved in their characteristic ochre color, with loggias and Venetian galleries. The Monastery of Agios Dionysios is worth a visit; the holy relics of the saint of the same name are preserved here. So do the outstanding museum of the monastery and the very interesting museums of the town. The area of Bochali, below the castle, will enchant you with its small, quiet streets and its old houses, with courtyards drowned in jasmine, with its authentic coffeehouses and its restaurants, where the old music of Zakynthos can be heard.

Above Bochali, the Venetian castle stands out, with its excellent panoramic view of today's Zakynthos town and the Ionian Sea. Stranis Hill, which inspired the verses of the Greek national anthem, by Dionysios Solomos, but also Bochali, above which the Venetian castle stands, with its outstanding panoramic view towards the modern town of Zakynthos and the Ionian Sea, will impress you. Just one walk on the streets of the town will convince us that in Zakynthos the efforts to preserve the town as it was before the earthquake concern not only the buildings, but its entire urban fabric.

In Zakynthos everything breathes a sense of nostalgia, a note of romanticism. The picturesque squares of the island, Dionysios Solomos Square, and Agios Markos Square, the long coastal road of Strata Marina, the old Rouga Square and today's Alexandrou Roma Street, everything brings us back to other times. Do not forget to walk to Strata Marina (as it is known), today officially called Konstantinou Lomvardou, the commercial center with its picturesque arches on Alexandrou Roma Street, and the stone-paved central square of Agios Markos, which gathers the most traffic.





The museums of Zakynthos

Byzantine Museum



The Byzantine Museum

The Byzantine Museum of Zakynthos is located on Solomos Square. Proceeding to the right of its entrance, you can go up to the first floor and cross the entire length of the building before descending to the entrance a second time. The museum houses a rich collection of portable icons, a real panorama of ecclesiastical painting from Byzantine times until the 19th century, with approximately one thousand paintings of post-Byzantine, Ionian, and local art. Work by Damaskinos, Tzanes, Kallergis, Doxaras, Koutouzis, and Tsonis is exhibited. Although the older exhibits in the museum are characteristic examples of Byzantine art, the work of Panagiotis Doxaras (1622-1700), who had studied in Venice, is naturalistic and belongs to the Ionian School. The son of Doxaras, Nikolaos, continued the Western tradition, as did Nikolaos Koutouzis (1741-1813), whose work one may see in the museum but also in the church of Agios Dionysios. The museum also houses the iconostasis of the church of Pantokrator, the church of Agios Dimitrios, and the exterior of the church of Agios Andreas from Volimes. Hellenistic and Byzantine sculptures and statues are also housed there. (Telephone: (+30) 26950 42714)

Solomos Museum



Solomos Museum

The Solomos Museum, which is located on Agios Markos Square, includes on its ground floor the impressive tombs of Dionysios Solomos (1798-1857) and of the other great poet from Zakynthos, Andreas Kalvos (1792-1869). At the entrance there is a piece of the holly oak, in whose shadow, on Stranis Hill, Solomos was inspired to write the "Hymn to Freedom" that later became the national anthem of Greece, as well as the "Free Besieged" in May of 1823. (Telephone: (+30) 26950 48982)

Naval Museum



Milanio Nautical Museum

The Milanio Nautical Museum is located in Tsilivi (5 km from the town). Through its gallery of paintings, which has received many awards, it is exclusive in Greece in presenting the course of evolution of the Naval History of our Nation, and is first in the world for its research on Greek boats of the middle ages, thus gathering 4000 years of history. Nautical objects belonging to renowned ships, photographic materials, uniforms, and historic treasures complete the unique historical record. (Telephone: (+30) 26950 42436)

Agricultural Museum



Vertzagio Agricultural Museum

In the village of Pigadakia, belonging to the Community of Alykes, since 1998 the Vertzagio Cultural and Agricultural Museum has been operating. The Museum exhibits the cultural and agricultural history of a traditional Greek village on Zakynthos, with rare items from the entire island, some of which date from the 16th century.

(Telephone: (+30) 26950 84077)

Chelmis Museum of Natural History

The Chelmis Museum of Natural History is located in Agia Marina, a beautiful village at the centre of Zakynthos, with an amazing view of Zakynthos town and of Laganas Bay. It houses noteworthy collections with more than 500 specimens from the natural world, such as birds, fish, shellfish from the seven seas of the world, plants, and animals that have become extinct, stones, and minerals.

(Telephone: (+30) 26950 65040)

Ecclesiastical Museum

On the raised ground floor of the new wing, which was inaugurated on November 12, 2000, the new Museum and Sacristy of the Holy Monastery of Strofades and Agios Dionysios. The Museum, a site of culture and historical memory, consists of icons and other treasures of Christian art, which mainly come from the Monastery of Strofades. (Telephone: (+30) 26950 48203)

Romas Mansion

A home, a family, a history of four centuries linked to Zakynthos, the Ionian Islands, and Greece. It opened its doors to visitors in order for the elders to remember and for the young to learn the size of the gap left behind by the destructive earthquake of 1953. The visitor will have the opportunity to see firsthand, and not through historical narration, and thus to understand better the last remains of a society and an era that had contributed so much to the formation – at various levels – of modern Hellenism, which unfortunately is no longer present.

(Telephone: (+30) 26950 28381)



Chelmis Museum



Ecclesiastical Museum



Romas Mansion



National Maritime Park

National Maritime Park – Thematic Centre for the Sea Turtle

In order to inform visitors fully about the Caretta – caretta and all the significant ecosystems of the Bay of Laganas, in the area of Dafni Vasilikou there is a special Exhibit Center devoted to the sea turtle, where, with the use of multimedia and guided tours by specialized tour guides, children and adults “travel” to the world of the National Maritime Park of Zakynthos. (Telephone: (+30) 2695029870-2)

Askos Stone Park

The only one of its kind in Greece, a natural park for the exploration of flora and fauna. This is a park of 500,000 square meters where all the flora and fauna of the island are gathered, as well as trees and animals from other parts of the world (for example deer, raccoons, llamas, ponies, and chinchillas). The areas of the park have become protected and are now a unique ecological reserve for the island. Approximately 200,000 trees, plants, and

shrubs belonging to 120 different species, approximately 1,500 animals (45 different species), kilometres of traditional stone structures, cobblestone paths, and various stone and woodwork compositions in complete harmony with the natural environment. (Telephone: (+30) 2695029870-2)

The largest flag in the world

At the southwest edge of the island, very near the lighthouse of Keri and above the Myzithres islets, a flagpole 50 meters high has been built, on which the largest raised flag in the world waves; it was certified for the Guinness Book of World Records on May 20, 2007. Visible from 20 miles away, 670 square meters of the blue and white Greek flag are waving with the blue sky, the green landscape of Keri, and the calm and sometimes troubled Ionian Sea in the background. With the sound created by this huge fabric in the wind causing awe, by itself it constitutes one more reason to visit western Zakynthos.

The largest flag in the world



Askos Stone Park





Μνημεία

The monuments, witnesses to the history and culture of a place, could not form an exception in Zakynthos. The statue of Solomos in the square named after him, the statue of Glory personified, which responds to the verses of the national poet of Greece, the statues of Foscolo, national poet of Italy, and columns that recall memories of the history of the Society of Friends and the writings of Kalvos, can be found on the island for knowledge, memory, and mainly for imitation.

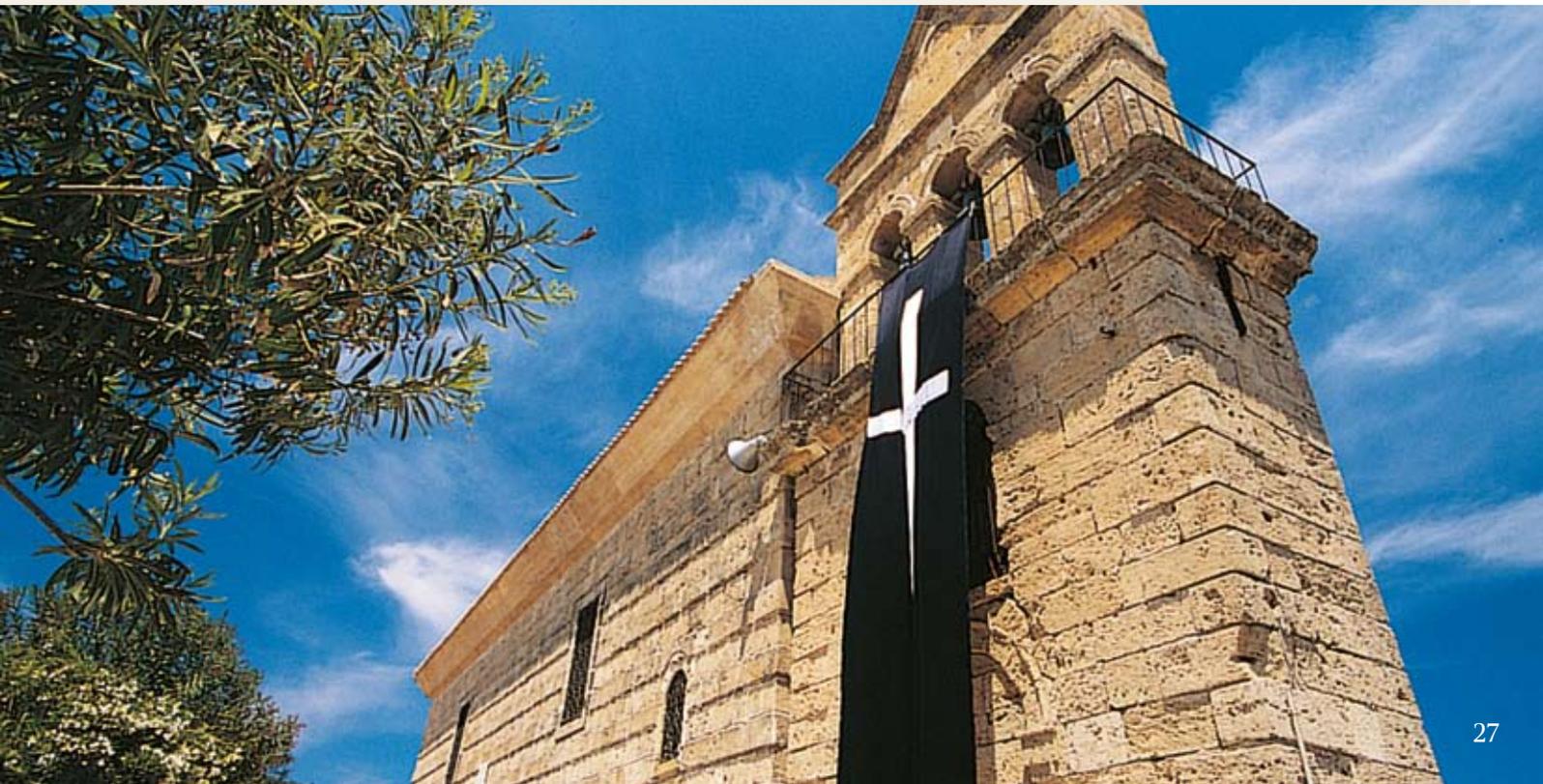


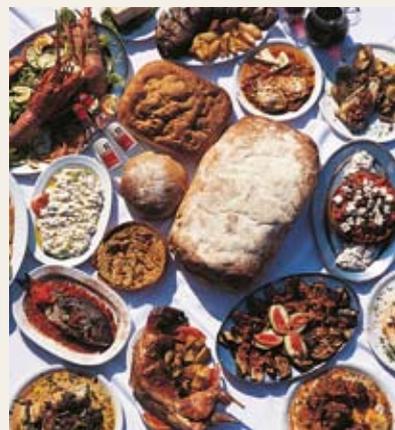


Churches

Some of the old churches of Zakynthos, which were preserved and renovated after the earthquake of 1953, are particularly noteworthy. The church of the patron saint of the island, Saint Dionysius, which is located in the center of the town, where the relics of the saint are also kept, is one of the most significant. The amazing Ecclesiastical Museum is also located there.

Agios Nikolaos of Koiliomeno, in the village with the same name, the monastery of Panagia Spiliotissa in Orthonies, the monastery of Yperagathos and the monastery of Saint George of the Cliffs after it, Agia Mavra and Ypapandi in Machairado, the monastery of Anafonitria in Anafonitria, and Panagia Keriotissa in Keri are only some of the churches of particular architectural interest on the island of Zakynthos.





Aroma of the Mediterranean

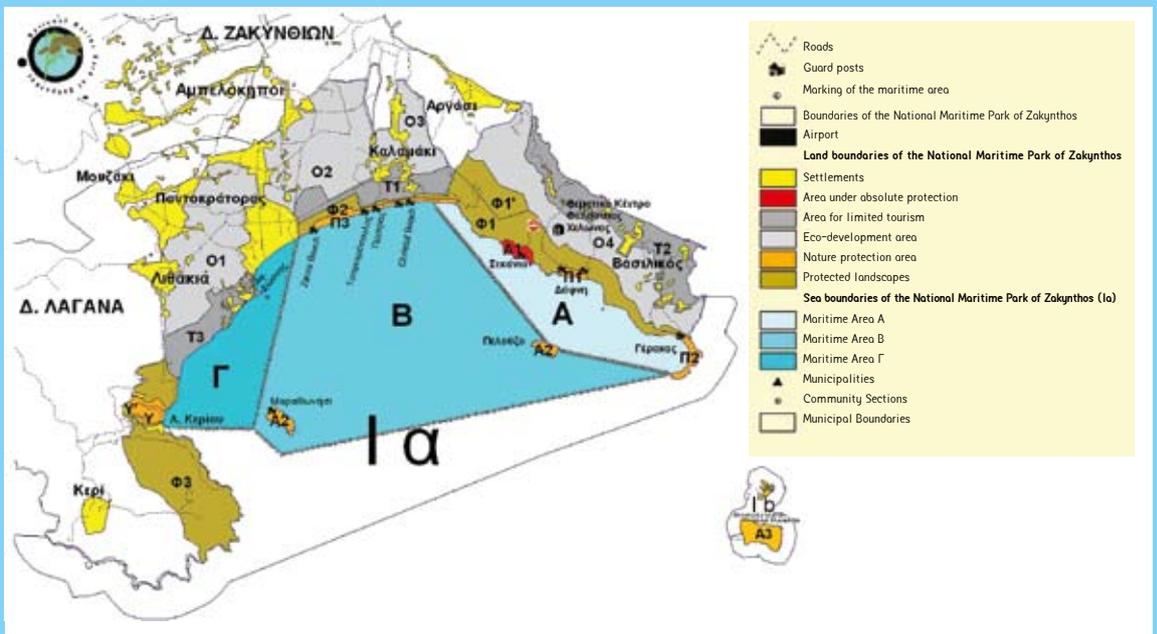
What is it that makes the cuisine of the Ionian Islands different from that of any other part of Greece? The answer, naturally, is the local recipes, the historic circumstances of the past, the economic possibilities, and the materials available. The cuisine of the Ionian Islands is mainly in fact Mediterranean, dominated by the use of virgin olive oil, and neutralizes the acidity of tomatoes and lemon with intense garlic and prefers aromatic herbs to hot spices.

Zakynthos possesses many olive trees and produces oil that is among the most delicious in Greece. Thus, recipes from Zakynthos, which do not change significantly over time, are rich in olive oil and hearty, flavored with garlic. A “national” dish could be considered to be Sartsa, that is, beef cooked in a pan with tomatoes, garlic, Ladotyro cheese and a little oregano. Another dish that is established in the collection of recipes from Zakynthos is Skordos-toupi, which is made with eggplant and large amounts of garlic.

The specialties of Zakynthos also include local Ladotyri cheese, a spicy cheese made from sheep’s milk, which is preserved in clay pots filled with olive oil, but also local Myzithra cheese, salted or unsalted. The latter, in fact, is eaten with sugar or honey. The homemade bread of Zakynthos is also renowned, as are its sweets, such as mandolato – Zakynthos is considered its homeland – which is made with egg whites, toasted almonds, sugar or honey, and pasteli, an ancient Greek dessert made of sesame seeds, honey, and almonds.







How to arrive there

BY AIR

Zakynthos can be reached from Athens from the Eleftherios Venizelos Airport every day, with daily flights that are 45 minutes long. There are also flights from Kefallonia, Corfu, and Thessaloniki all year round, 3 times per week. Zakynthos has direct charter flights to many European cities during the tourist season (April to October). The airport of Zakynthos is 4 km from Zakynthos town and has an excellent transportation network that connects them.

BY ROAD

The Zakynthos Public Bus Company has daily routes to Patra, Corinth, Athens, and three times per week to Nafaktos, Amfissa, Almyro, Larisa, and Thessaloniki. It should be noted that it is easy to visit Ancient Olympia from Zakynthos.

FERRIES

Zakynthos has a ferry connection to Kyllini (on the opposite shore of the Peloponnese) every hour in the summer months and five times per day during the rest of the year. Zakynthos is also connected with Kefallonia daily and with Italy during the summer months.

