

Ionian Island Adventure
Ionian Sea
Start and ends in Kefalonia Island - Greece
3rd of April - 14th of April 2024
(Meet & Greet 3rd - start paddling 4th - finish paddling
13th - Depart 14th) 10 Paddling days

Expedition Outline

Crystal clear, aqua blue waters which lie below lush green mountains and limestone cliffs, deserted beaches, hidden coves, hospitable locals with a rich culture. This is what awaits you on this 10 day multi day Ionian island hopping expedition, Greece.

Sea kayaking these coast lines and discovering the cultures and history has been done by sea going adventures for thousands of years.

We will be paddling in remote areas and wild camping on pristine beaches and coves. A large part of the coast line is not inhabited, making you feel you are in the wilderness. There are caves and tiny coves to explore . The paddling will take you around rocky headlands, you will do open sea crossings between islands and enjoying long paddling days.

This is a true expedition going in whatever direction and to whatever island the elements allows us to go.

Distances are variable, depending on weather and availability of landing spots! You will feel you have achieved 10 days of real expedition paddling, living out of a boat and leaving only footprints while making memories and experiencing an ancient coastline and culture.

The trip is a unique blend of wilderness paddling combined with civilisation, when you want it. Many of the towns are idyllic. Arriving into any port via a kayak is always a great experience. These towns are here because of seafarers, not car-driving tourists!

The Ionian Sea is part of the Mediterranean Sea, lying between Albania (northeast), Greece (east), Sicily (southwest), and Italy (west and northwest). Though considered by ancient authors to be part of the Adriatic Sea, the Ionian Sea is now seen as a separate body of water. In the Ionian Sea, south of Greece, the Mediterranean reaches its greatest depth (16,000 feet [4,900 metres]). The Ionian is connected with the Tyrrhenian Sea by the Strait of Messina and with the Adriatic Sea by the Strait of Otranto. The Ionian Sea includes the gulfs of Squillace and Taranto (Italy) and Árta, Patras, and Corinth (Greece). The Ionian Islands lie off the western coast of Greece.

The Ionian Islands are located on the western side of the Greece, historically and culturally these islands are strongly connected to Italy. The architecture of the capital towns, including Corfu Town, Zakynthos Town, and Argostoli, resembles a lot to the Venetian style as these islands were occupied by the Venetians. With similar architecture another characteristic the Ionian islands are lush green nature and some of the most beautiful beaches in the world. Ithaca, Kefalonia, Lefkáda, Paxos, Zakynthos, Kythira, Corfu and Meganisi have some amazing coastline to explore .

Some interesting facts on the Ionian islands geography and landscapes :

Ithaca consists of two limestone masses connected by a narrow, peninsula that curves to form the head of a gulf facing the Greek mainland. The island is separated from the island of Kefalonia to the west by the Ithákis Channel, approximately 2.5 miles (4 km) in width. The island was devastated by the earthquake of 1953 but was rebuilt. Itháki (Vathý), the chief place and port of the island, is well protected at the head of a narrow, deep, horseshoe-shaped inlet of the gulf.

Kefalonia, with an area of 302 square miles (781 square km), is mountainous, and Mount Aínos (ancient Mount Aenos; 5,341 feet [1,628 metres]) is often snowcapped for months. Except for the Raki, there are few permanent streams, and springs can fail in the summer. In the west a gulf penetrates the island from the south; on its east side is the capital and port of Argostólion, on its west side is the town of Lixoúrión. In 1953 an earthquake devastated the island, destroying Argostólion and other villages. Close to Argostólion are the ruins of Cranii and the Venetian castle of St George.

Lefkáda, the 117-square-mile (303-square-km) island is a hilly mass of limestone and bituminous shales culminating in the centre in Mount Eláti (3,799 feet [1,158 metres]). The chief town, Levkás, lies at the northeastern corner, which in antiquity was separated by a marshy isthmus. It was formerly called Amaxíki or Santa Maura; the latter is also the Venetian name for the island. Most of the population inhabit the wooded east coast and its valleys. Cape Leucatas at the southwestern tip of the island has fragments of the ruined temple of Apollo Leucatas; nearby are the 200-foot white cliffs that give the island its Greek name

Paxos, the smallest of the seven major Ionian Islands, about 12 miles (19 km) southwest of Párga on the coast of Epirus. A hilly mass of limestone covered with olive groves, Paxos rises to about 750 feet (230 m). Gáios on the east coast is the chief village and port.

Zákynthos, southernmost and third largest of the Ionian Islands, lying off the west coast of the Peloponnese. Zákynthos is indented by a deep bay with high cliffs on its south coast. The centre of Zákynthos is a fertile plain bounded on the west by barren limestone hills, 700 to 1,600 feet (200 to 500 metres) high, with many sinkholes and steep sea cliffs. The hills culminate in the 2,480-foot- (756-metre-) high Mount Vrakhiónas.

Kíthira, island, southernmost and easternmost of the Ionian Islands, off the southern Pelopónnisos.

Corfu, lying just off the coast of Epirus, it is about 36 miles (58 km) long, while its greatest breadth is about 17 miles (27 km) and its area

229 square miles (593 square km). Of limestone structure, the island is mountainous in the north and low in the south. Its northeastern protrusion, close to the Albanian coast, trends east-west and reaches a peak in Pantokrator Mountain (2,972 feet [906 metres]); the other range, in the island's centre, is lower. In 2007 the Old Town of Kérkyra was named a UNESCO world heritage site.

Experience Needed

To get the most out of the expedition you should be a competent Intermediate/Advanced sea kayaker and be comfortable in conditions associated with force 4/5 winds, be able to paddle 25-30Km per day and have some previous sea kayak expedition experience. If you have any questions regarding the required ability please feel free to contact us on:

shaun@seakayakingcornwall.com or info@seakayakingcornwall.com

What Is Included

Sea Kayaking Cornwall's experienced guide with area knowledge offering advice, assistance, planning and safety throughout the trip – over 15 years paddling these waters and coastline.

Kayak. We have a mixture of Prijon & Perception plastic boats

Paddles. Standard angle 45 degree - 1 piece in 205/210/215 lengths.

Spray decks - nylon because of the heat.

Buoyancy aids /PFD.

Not Included

Transport to and from Kefalonia.

Hotel accommodation (first/last nights), airport transfers, camping gear, food and drinks.

Please ensure you have adequate travel insurance.

Cost

£1195 from the 1st January 2024.

Location And Times

Reasonably priced flights arrive and depart regularly from the UK and a variety of European countries.

Once you have booked your flight to Kefalonia our starting point, please send us details, so we are aware what time you will be arriving to plan our briefing.

Once you have arrived catch a taxi directly to the 'Hotel Tourist'

We will have a briefing on the evening of the 3rd of April at the 'Hotel Tourist' once everyone has arrived. We will discuss the route for the week, weather & equipment before we go to the boats and prepare our kit.

Please book your accommodation for the first and last nights the 3rd and 13th of April directly with "Hotel Tourist".

The hotel is based in a very convenient and beautiful part of the Argostoli waterfront. Visit <http://www.hoteltourist-kefalonia.gr/en/> to see details of the hotel and make a booking.

A single supplement is applicable should you require a private room.

We will have 9 nights and 10 days out camping. It is possible to top up supplies along the way, so we suggest you buy 5 days supplies and buy additional food along the way.

Everyone will have a chance to shop for supplies on the first afternoon before we leave. Supermarkets for food, gas cylinders and other essentials are available very close to the hotel.

We will then go out for dinner to experience ARGOSTOLI nightlife, the capital “city” of Kefalonia - Optional and at personal expense.

We leave early the next morning and aim to paddle to as many islands as we can in the 10 days.

What To Bring - Recommended

- Travel insurance.
- Passport.
- Food. Packed lunches, dinners, snacks, hot drinks for minimum 5 days.
- Water. We will carry 6 x 1.5 litres of water to start and have opportunity to restock along the way.
- Camping kit: Tent, sleeping mat, sleeping bag – maybe bring a liner as a back up. It is spring and can still be relatively cold with rain. The weather can change, even in Greece.
- Cooking and eating equipment: Stove suitable to fit standard threaded gas cylinders or Trangias that run on blue spirits (meth’s).
- Personal clothing including waterproofs and at least two warm set’s in case we have a sudden change in weather which can happen in Spring and Autumn.
- Dry bags – various sizes for lunch, valuables and dry clothes to change into at the end of the day.
- Paddling kit: Cag or paddle jacket. Light paddle trousers if you prefer. Rash vests for sun protection, thermal rash vest as back up if weather changes. Please contact us if you are uncertain that you have the correct gear.

- Suitable footwear: wear sandals or booties for the beaches – these are pebbly and hard on the feet.
- Safety kit. We carry adequate safety kit. However, if you are a qualified first aider or understand how to use personal safety equipment such as towlines then please bring them along. A group can never have enough safety equipment on a trip!
- Sponge.
- Sun cream.
- Sunglasses.
- Sun hat / warm hat.
- Swimming costumes.
- Snorkelling kit if you wish.
- Insect repellent, tick removers and midge spray.
- Camera.
- Personal toiletries - but these can be bought on the island.
- Personal medication and first aid kit.
- Money, as there are cafes and restaurants to visit.

Argostoli has got supermarkets, fish markets and fresh fruit markets all within a one-minute walk from Hotel Tourist - so don't worry if you forget something!

If you have kit that you prefer (e.g. left hand paddle) or are familiar with and that fits you comfortably, please bring it with you. We travel with our personal paddles, PFD and clothing.

Remember you will carry everything in your kayaks, so have dry bags to store all your belongings and travel light! Spare bags and extra kit

can be stored at our “Kefalonia Base” for the week while we are on the water. Please keep it small, we only have limited space available to us.

We will try and stop each day at bars and traditional restaurants and the occasional villages to enjoy the sights and tastes of the Ionian islands. Enjoyment of delicious Greek specialties is optional and at personal expense. This trip is however at the beginning of the season so not everything is open to tourists, so be prepared to be alone and independent for most of the trip.

We will brief each day about food options, so don't worry, you won't live on baked beans for the expedition! Make sure you have Euro cash with you before we launch. However, cash machines are available in most of the towns we pass through, but a small back up of cash is handy as not all ATM's are operational yet.

Looking forward to sharing our “DEVOTION TO THE OCEAN” with you!

Sea Kayaking Cornwall Team