

<<爱奥尼亚岛指南The Rough G>>

图书基本信息

书名：<<爱奥尼亚岛指南The Rough Guide to the Ionian Islands 3rd ed.>>

13位ISBN编号：9781843530671

10位ISBN编号：1843530678

出版时间：2006-12

出版时间：Rough Guides

作者：Rough Guides 著

页数：311

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内容概要

Tracing a ragged line down the west coast of Greece, the Ionian islands are no more than 30km from the mainland, yet this has been far enough to exclude them from many of the key events in Greek history, most notably occupation by the Ottoman Turks. However, their position at the south of the Adriatic instead put them at the mercy of northerly invaders, primarily the Venetians and, later, the British, whose cultures fused with those of the islands. The Venetians, who first arrived in the archipelago in the late fourteenth century, imported language, art, music, law and architecture; the British turned up in the eighteenth century and unpacked local government, education, civil engineering, cricket and ginger beer. To a lesser or greater degree, all these influences can still be found in the islands, and the Italians and British remain the region's main summer visitors. The Ionian islands comprise a core group of six — Corfu (K é rkyra), Pax í (Paxos), Lefk á dha (Lefkas), Ith á ki (Ithaca), Kefalloni á (Cephalonia) and Z á kynthos (Zante). Kathira, isolated at the foot of the Peloponnese, along with its satellite Andikathira, is officially part of the Ionian group, but we haven't covered them in this Guide, as they bear few similarities to the core group of islands and share no transport connections with them. As the big narrative happened elsewhere, the Ionian has no major archeological sites — though Olympia, just two hours' drive from P á tra on the Peloponnese mainland, is accessible from the southern islands. However, there are some spectacular medieval fortresses, and museums on the larger islands trace the archipelago's cultures back to the Paleolithic era. Ith á ki is still the favourite for the disputed site of Odysseus's Homeric home and has some scattered remains as proof, with neighbouring islands laying claim to particular settings and events from the Odyssey. But the major feature that distinguishes the Ionians from the mainland and the central swarm of Greek islands in the Aegean is climate: a reliable rainfall pattern has allowed centuries of fairly stable agriculture and has nurtured olive trees, vineyards, rich fruit and vegetable crops, and even wheat and cereal farming on some islands. The Ionian islands display similar geographical characteristics, too: all are mountainous (even tiny Pax í has a small mountain of sorts), with their east coasts tending to be gentle dip slopes above flat, sometimes reclaimed, farm land. The west coasts are often rocky, with cliffs up to 200 metres high. This geology conspires against tourism, placing most of the best beaches on the less accessible west coasts, and the worst on the handy east coasts — where lazy developers have tended to concentrate their attentions. With the exception of Corfu's southwest and north coasts, the south coast of Kefalloni á, southern Z á kynthos and pockets of western Lefk á dha, most beaches are pebbly, usually shelving into sand. Island-hopping through the Ionian is not as tricky as you might imagine and, with a month on your hands, you could easily get a taster of all six major islands, though you would be unable to see them all in depth. There is certainly not the abundance of ferry and hydrofoil lines weaving through the group that the Aegean is blessed with, but most of the islands have at least one connection with their nearest neighbour. The chain breaks down, though, between the northern duo, Corfu and Pax í, and the southern quartet: apart from a sporadic summer service between Corfu and Kefalloni á, there are no direct boats between the two groups, forcing you to travel via the mainland, though that in itself can be a pleasurable experience and allows you to glimpse a different side of Greece. Full details of all the possible inter-island connections are given throughout the Guide.

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