

CORFU The Experience of a Lifetime



MUNICIPALITY OF CORFU



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Old Town of Corfu
inscribed on
the World Heritage List in 2007





“My name is Nausicaa. I owe this special name to my parents, who are fans of Greek mythology. Nausicaa, the daughter of King Alkinoos, offered Odysseus warm hospitality and care when he was washed ashore on the island of the Phaeaceans, nowadays known as Corfu. The ancient port of the Phaeaceans was Odysseus’ last stop on his journey home to Ithaca...””

Nausicaa 13, U.K.

Homer placed on the island of Corfu one of the most beautiful episodes of the “Odyssey”. Apollonius of Rhodes mentions in his poem “the Argonautica” that it was here that Jason and his Argonauts found refuge from the Colchic fleet.

Today, the same land keeps inspiring visitors and luring them to follow in the footsteps of history, imprinted on every single corner of the island; findings from the prehistoric and archaic period, masterpieces of the classic antiquity, roman, byzantine and medieval monuments and folk art coexist with the modern way of life.





I have been visiting Corfu for the past 15 years. The first time I visited Corfu was on the occasion of a medical conference when I extended my stay on the island for another ten days. Thereafter, I used to visit Corfu almost every year together with my wife Brigitte. It is convenient for us because there is a direct flight from Berlin... Oh! Life on Corfu is just fabulous!

Oscar 52, Germany



Today, Corfu ranks amongst Europe's most fascinating destinations. Marked by intriguing contrast and consecutive influences, the island is a crossroads of colors and civilizations. It is located in the northern Ionian Sea, at the entrance to the Adriatic Sea, between Greece's mainland and Italy. Due to its strategic position in the Mediterranean Sea, the island has been "the apple of discord" among the big powers of each era. Furthermore, its position enables visitors today to reach the island by direct flight from almost all European countries, while there are daily ferry connections with many Italian ports.

The Mediterranean climate and the high quality of life make Corfu an ideal place to stay any time of the year. The winter is mild with relatively high temperatures (7-20° C) and sunshine for approximately 4,5 hours per day, so one can often go on excursions to admire Corfu's beautiful nature. Springtime, with the ceaseless colour alternations is undoubtedly amazing! During summertime, the fascinating beaches, the cosmopolitan atmosphere and the uncountable traditional festivals guarantee a once-in-a-lifetime vacation. In autumn, time has come to take your last plunge into the warm sea waters.





My job is to organize incentive trips all around the world. However, my best travel experiences have always been in Corfu. As soon as I land on the island, I feel a warm and pleasant feeling overwhelming me. I enjoy strolling around in the fabulous Old Town, and I always think that I would like to stay there forever.

Aby 28, U.K.

The whole town of Corfu is a monument. Narrow paved lanes (kantounia) with hung out laundry, flowering bougainvilleas, buildings with traces of Venetian, French and British influence attract any visitor. Local history, culture and tradition are thoroughly protected in museums and collections. In Corfu town's historic center, the medieval fortresses and the peripheral fortifications compose a unique architectural ensemble, which was added in 2007 to the list of **UNESCO'S World Heritage Monuments**.







The **Old Fortress** and the **New Fortress**, perched on commanding locations on either side of the town, offer panoramic views of the Old Town of Corfu. Their architecture is testament to all the major advances in 15th – 19th century defence-related design.

The famous **Liston**, which constitutes the meeting point for most social gatherings and is the symbol of Corfu's historic centre, is the most characteristic monument that bears traces of the French presence on the island. The **"San Giacomo"** building, which accommodates today Corfu's Town Hall, was erected by the Venetians in the 17th century in order to house the Loggia dei Nobili.



The **Museum of Asian Art**, which is unique in Greece, is exclusively dedicated to the art and antiquities from the Far East. It is housed in the **Palace of St. Michael and St. George**, a characteristic sample of British neo-classical architecture. The same palace is the home of the **Municipal Art Gallery of Corfu**, with outstanding exhibits of the Eptanesian School.

In the **Byzantine Museum of Corfu** (Antivouniotissa) are exhibited icons from the 15th to the 19th century, which bear witness to Corfu's outstanding role in the evolution of the ecclesiastic art of painting.

The **Banknote Museum** of Greece in Corfu is one of the top banknote museums in the world. Its collection includes rare banknotes and is accommodated in the historic Ionian Bank building. A visit to the **Music Museum "Nikolaos Halikiopoulos Mantzaros"** brings to light Corfu's long music tradition. The house where **Dionysios Solomos**, Greece's national poet, lived, houses a museum of the same name with a rich library. In the **Serbian Hearth** (or the Serbian House) revive moments of the past, when Corfu, which was the allied forces' military base, offered shelter to the Serbian army.

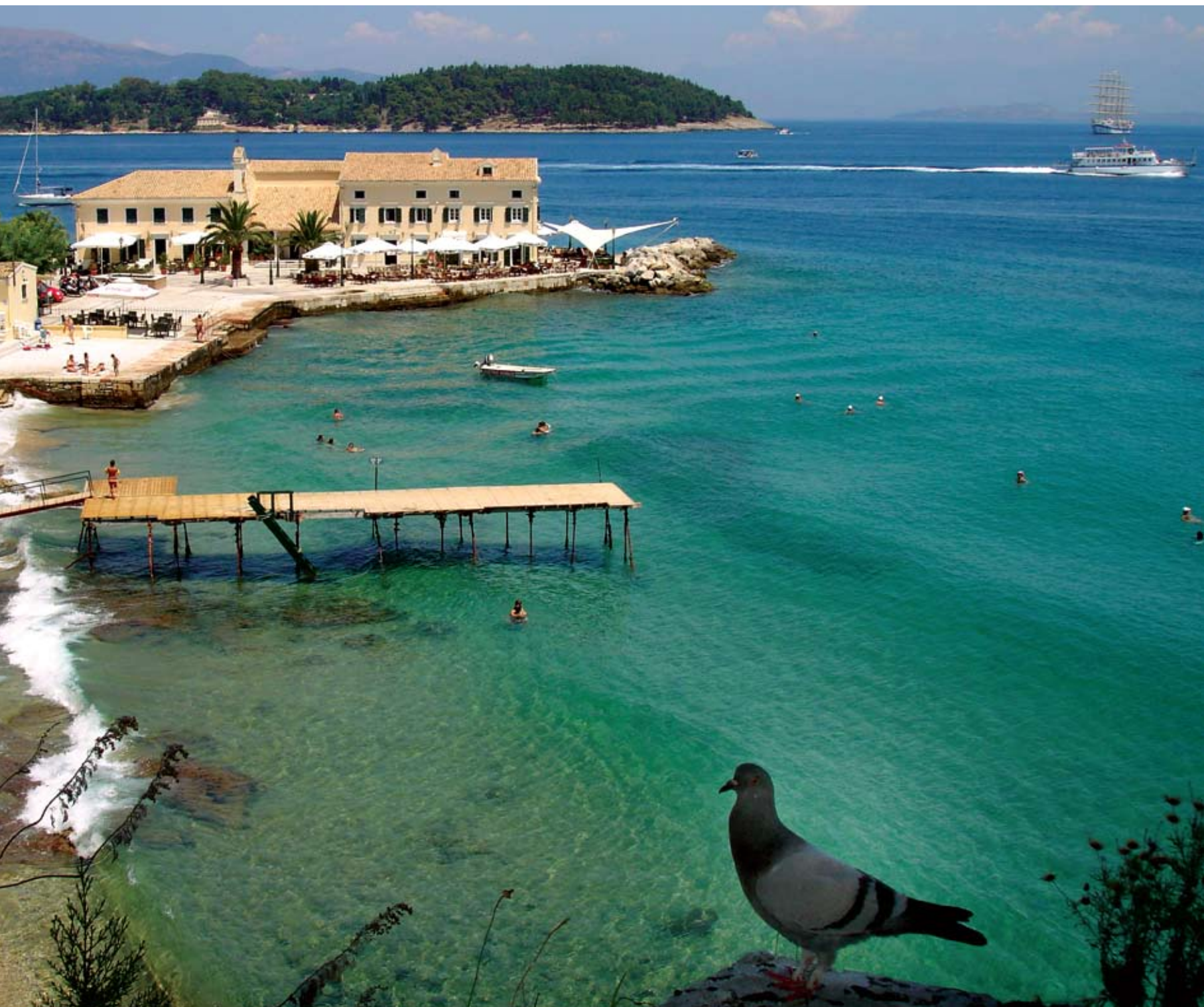
Findings which come exclusively from the island of Corfu are exhibited in the **Archaeological Museum** and the **Museum of Palaeopolis**, in the **Mon Repos Mansion**. These exhibits display the island's continuous presence in the ancient world.

The neo-classical style building of the **Ionian Parliament** is the place where the unification of the Ionian Islands with Greece was passed. Today, the building operates as a branch of the **Municipal Art Gallery** and serves as the venue for civil marriage ceremonies. The **Ionian Academy** housed the first Greek University and nowadays is a department of the Ionian University.

Further significant cultural places are: the **Reading Society of Corfu**, which is the oldest intellectual institution of modern Greece; the **Archives of Corfu**, which are accommodated in the building of the former British Barracks inside the Old Fortress, and the **Municipal Theatre**, with an intense cultural activity, illustrating the Corfiots' need for quality entertainment.

Some of the island's religious sites that are worth visiting are: the **Church of St. Spyridon**, which accommodates the Holy Relic of the island's guardian Saint in a silver shrine; the **Church of St. Jason and Sosipater**, which constitutes the island's most significant byzantine monument and the **Metropolitan Church**, which accommodates the Holy Relic of St. Theodora. A visit to the **Anglican Church**, the **Roman Catholic Cathedral "Duomo"** and the **Jewish Synagogue** will acquaint you with the town's multicultural character.

At a breath's distance from Corfu Town lies the green island **Vido**. Worth a visit on the island are two well-maintained beaches, the historic Church of St. Stefan and the Serbian Mausoleum. In the suburbs, the well known **Pontikonisi island** and the **Vlacheraina Monastery**, compose Corfu's most familiar and recognized picture.







When I first came to Corfu, I was amazed by the traditional villages and the countless paths through the olive groves. I stroll in

the alleys and everybody greets me as if I were a relative or as if I had always lived here.

Christin 26, France

Villages and traditional settlements, depending on the years they were inhabited, trace back to the Byzantine epoch, the Venetian Epoch but also to 20th century folk architecture. The stone paved houses, the classic town square with the small coffee houses, the picturesque chapels and above all, the hospitable people will charm you and make you feel at home. Here, you will find unique sights to visit including imposing castles as well as collections and museums illustrating the island's identity in history, art, local habits and customs.

The findings from the Roman mansions in the northern and southeastern coasts but also the famous "**Achilleion**" prove that Corfu is an all-time tourist destination. The palace which was once the summer residence of the Empress of Austria Elisabeth and later on of the German Kaiser Wilhelm II operates today as a museum and as a cultural events' venue.



In **Palaeokastritsa**, the **Monastery of Virgin Mary**, with panoramic view, attracts thousands of visitors from all over the world. The **Pantocrator Monastery**, with notable frescoes, is located on Corfu's highest mountain and constitutes the reference point of the broader area. **Angelokastro**, one of the most considerable castles in Greece, is located on a 330 m high slope and offers a magnificent view. Two further castles, the **Kassiopi Castle** on the northeastern edge of the village and the Byzantine **Gardiki Castle** of the 13th century in the southern part of Corfu, date back to the distant past, at the time of the battles with pirates and aspiring conquerors.

In the southern part of Corfu you can see the **Lefkimi Salt Pans**, which date back to the Byzantine era. Two of the restored Venetian salt warehouses are used today by the Municipality of Corfu as venues to host cultural events.

In the **Kapodistrias Museum**, 4 kilometres away from Corfu Town, are exhibited personal objects of Greece's first Governor, Ioannis Kapodistiras, who was an outstanding personality in the history of Europe. The **Castello Mimbelli** Villa, in the village Kato Korakiana, accommodates a branch of the National Art Gallery.

In the village Sinarades, there is the **Historic Folk Museum of Messi**, an original 19th century house presenting the everyday life of a rural family from that time. The **Olive Tree Museum**, which is housed in an old olive press in the village Kynopiastes, acquaints the visitor with the traditional olive tree processing methods. The olive tree products are directly related to the locals' way of life. The images drawn from Corfu's countryside in the early past century are complemented by a visit to the **Acharavi Folk Museum**.





Chic and delicate by nature, Corfu has an unsurpassed natural beauty. The sea, the sun and the wind have carved an impressive shoreline on the island. Golden sandy and snow-white pebbled beaches, fine carved rocks resembling sculptures from a modern gallery, trees which stretch out their shadow up to the water. With an exceptional geomorphology and notable contrasts, Corfu hosts wetlands of unsurpassed beauty and unique ecosystems, which attract fans of alternative tourism.

The east coast beaches, which are protected by the mainland shore-line are ideal for swimming due to their still waters as well as for explorations due to their rich seabed. In the north-eastern coastline, there are wonderful sandy beaches with shallow waters, abundant shade and small taverns by the sea.

Corfu's west coast beaches are "caressed" by the winds. The prevailing wind Maistro brings waves and breeze from Venice, while Ostria carries heat waves from North Africa's beaches. As a result, the landscape is marked by long sandy beaches and some of the most beautiful rock formations.

The northwest side of the island is dominated by rocky, rugged shores and it is ideal for underwater explorations. The endless golden sandy beaches and the shallow turquoise waters of the entire west and southwest coast, at times crowded and at times hidden from the public, will always tempt you to play with the waves, the sun, the wind or read a book in peace.









I live in Milan and I visit Corfu every year with my family. I sail to the Diapontian Islands by yacht. There, I enjoy the serene environment; I give lessons to my son how to fish; I truly relax!

Janni 45, Italy



Some miles away from Corfu's cosmopolitan life, some beautiful small islands stand out for their peaceful way of life, offering an alternative to anyone who wishes to enjoy tranquil and serene holidays. The picturesque settlements and paths, the small traditional taverns and the crystal clear waters compose a "different" suggestion for paradise-like holidays, carefreeness and touring in a unique natural landscape.

The island of **Othonoi**, the westernmost point of Greece, is the ideal place for sailing, trekking and fishing. You will be thrilled by the Calypso cave, the beaches Ammos, Lefki Ammos (white sand) and Fyki.

Ereikousa is a round-shaped island. Its name derives from the heather bush (reiki in Greek) which is met in abundant quantities on the island. The south coast, where the settlement Porto is located, is an immense stretch of sandy beach. A footpath leads northwards, through the lush vegetation to the Pangini beach.

Mathraki is the smallest of the Diapontian islands. Its shores form small bays with Ammos and Apidies being the two most significant ones. Both of them serve as harbours for the small caiques, which connect the island with Corfu. The island has fine-sandy beaches, while the reefs and the rocky islets around it attract the fishing boats from all over the region. At the two ends of the island are located the two villages, Ano Mathraki and Kato Mathraki.





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I visited Corfu for the first time last year, on the occasion of a scientific conference. I was impressed by the infrastructure but also the organized tourists' groups I met in my hotel. I was also excited with the island's market. I will definitely come back!”

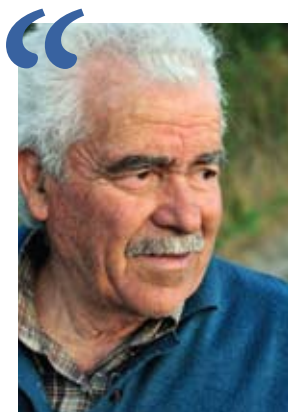
Joachim 55, Austria



The upgraded infrastructure and touristic services make Corfu an ideal destination for group tours. Conventions, religious and study tours, yacht races but also the Rally Antika make their appointment every year on the island of Corfu. Corfu's market resembles the mirror of its history, while its atmosphere will transport you to Corfu's 17th and 18th century commerce.



Today, high-quality local products are be found in every corner of the island but also shops, which keep alive the tradition of past centuries. Handmade jewels, ceramics, wood-carved objects, wine, honey, koum quat, pure olive oil, green soap, delicious delicatessen and the tsitsimpira (a type of ginger beer) are some of the traditional products you will find in abundant quantities and at good prices.



fresh fish, and wine from our own vineyards...

I grew up in a seaside village on Corfu. My grandfather taught me to value the local products of my land: pure olive oil,

Spyros 74, Corfu



With typical Mediterranean characteristics and Venetian influences, Corfu's cuisine bears witness to the island's exceptional cultural influences.

The single-crop farming of the olive has endured since its imposition in the period of the Venetian rule. As a result, Corfu's landscape is dominated by immense olive groves.

Abundant oil and high quality wine from the dry-soil slopes are present every day on the table. Delicious fish from the crystal clear Ionian Sea waters, local fruits and vegetables and first quality cheese products from small producers, guarantee unique culinary experiences. Don't miss a stroll in the island's outdoor markets to experience images, tastes and smells from Corfu's countryside!







I own a yacht which I moor in Corfu throughout the winter. The geographical position of the island, the unsurpassed beauty of the landscape, the safety of the ports and mooring places, the mild climate and the international airport were decisive factors in my choice.”

Hans 38, Holland

Corfu is without doubt the ideal maritime destination. The island is privileged not only due to its thousands-of-year long maritime tradition but also due to the favorable conditions for sea voyagers: there are short distances between the shores and there are favourable conditions regarding the wind force and the land and air temperatures. There are certainly amazing water sports and recreation opportunities to cover the needs even of the most demanding fans.





Scuba Diving

The coasts, the coves, the capes and the endless reefs compose a small paradise for the seabed fans. Therefore, plenty of organized scuba diving centers operate all over the island.

Water sports

On many of the island's beaches, there are water sports centers where water sports trainers will initiate you to the charm of a ride over the waves: water ski, sea jet, windsurf, kite surf, parachute but also pedalos and canoes stay anytime at your disposal in order for you to trace out your own course on the sea's surface!

Trekking

The lush vegetation, the traditional villages and the mild terrain make trekking on the island of Corfu an exciting experience. Even on your first "off the road" walking route, you will encounter uncommon wildflowers, "secret" lakes and shadowy olive groves. Path networks with signs and rest areas offer the ideal conditions to enjoy a wonderful excursion in Corfu's nature.



Horse Riding

With horses for beginners but also for experienced riders and plenty of old paths and rural roads, the horse riding centers offer unrestrained possibilities to horse riding fans.

Bicycle tours

There are organized tourists' groups who visit the island exclusively for a bicycle tour. An exploration adventure through unknown paths ending up in isolated beaches is a unique experience.





Golf

On the island of Corfu, there is a well known eighteen-hole golf course. The Corfu Golf Club was designed by the famous architect Donald Harradine and it is located in the Ropa Valley in Ermones. It is open to the public from March until November, and is suitable not only for beginners but also for experienced players.

Cricket

An almost two-century tradition has been continued to the present day in Greece's only place with such a notable infrastructure for cricket. Official tournaments and friendly matches are organized all year round in the most atmospheric pitch in Europe: the Spianada Square (Esplanade), within the historic center of the town. However, the cricket pitch which is located in Gouvia marina offers more comfort and better infrastructure.



*“No cricket player
can complete his training
without visiting Corfu.”*

*Ronald Arthur Roberts, author and
correspondent for Daily Telegraph, 1961*



For me, “holidays” means the classic triptych: sun, sea and fun. This is why I consciously choose Corfu as my summer holidays destination. Incredible light, infinite azure, non-stop clubbing... Best moment of the night? When the sun goes up and I take a plunge into the sea!

Amika 21, Sweden



The best beach bars can be found on the island's sandy beaches. Professional Dj's, non-stop dance, incredible fun. Numberless clubs are scattered in the seaside villages to offer unrestrained night-life entertainment opportunities. Bars with lounge atmosphere for quiet nights are nestled in rocks or in the town's picturesque stone-paved streets.

Here, the party starts early and ends always next morning!!!









I am a cellist from St. Petersburg. The first time I came to Corfu was when I was invited to a festival. I was surprised when I realized the extensive music tradition of the island. I came back at Easter, because I had heard that this is the greatest celebration of Orthodoxy in Greece. What I experienced was amazing and moving.

Tatiana 25, Russia

With internationally recognized philharmonic orchestras and choirs, Corfu is a perennial source of music. This cultural dynamic is prominent in the world of music and is stamped on the religious festivities and music events with exceptional quality.

You will find out that, music is the prevailing Art on the island.

Music exists everywhere; in the fetes, in the Saint's processions, even in Corfu's dialect. The magnificent melodious nights in the town's narrow paved streets, the international music events and the Ionian University's seminars attract thousands of music fans every summer.

Easter time is probably the best period to discover the decisive influence of music in the island's religious tradition. Choirs, ecclesiastic music concerts, bands and the processions of the Saint express the Divine Drama. Devout atmosphere, thousands of visitors, the unique habits and customs like the "Pot throwing (botides)" custom on Holy Saturday morning offer an once-in-a-lifetime experience!

In this glorious celebration, various elements come together harmoniously; the Christian faith, the pre-Christian tradition, the powerful presence of Saint Spyridon, the Catholic community and of course the spring atmosphere.





I am honoured to be the Mayor of Corfu, a place with exceptional light and a unique identity.

Corfu's geographical position at the entrance of the Adriatic Sea had early on determined its course in history. The island became a point of communication and exchange of cultural perspectives, a protective port, a safe fortification, a significant replenishment station for ships during long commercial voyages...

This influence is prominently reflected in the Old Town's appearance, the fortresses and the fortifications, which contributed to Corfu's inclusion in the list of UNESCO's World Heritage Monuments.

Nowadays, this same place continues to mix cultures, to compose particularities, and to produce its own autonomous cultural features. It continues to live with respect for tradition, to preserve a green environment, and to catch up with modernization without losing contact with its roots.

Corfu's people are hospitable and open; they know how to offer their hospitality generously, to welcome the visitor, to win enthusiastic friends.

For decades tourism has found in Corfu one of its most special expressions. The natural beauty, the safe environment, the numberless archaeological and historic sites and the mild climate, all these combined with easy access to the island, have made Corfu a favorite destination.

I am glad to welcome you to this unique place. I am sure that once you get to know it, you will love it forever.



*The Mayor of Corfu
Ioannis Trepeklis*





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