

THE ISLAND OF KEFALONIA

The Greek island of Kefalonia is truly a pearl. Located in the Ionian Sea west of Greece, it's the biggest of the Ionian islands with almost 800 square kilometers of enchanting landscapes surrounded by crystal clear waters. It's also the most mountainous with Mount Aenos rising to a height of 1628 meters.

Caves, inviting beaches, sandy coves, charming villages, delicious local specialties... all of these will enchant you !

Winters are quite mild and summers are hot and breezy.

The department of Kefalonia also includes the



small island of Ithaca surrounded by luxuriant vegetation and turquoise sea that can be reached in 35 minutes by ferry from Kefalonia.

According to the poet Homer, the ancient hero Ulysses stayed here, in the village of Stravos, where you can admire the statue in his honor in the town square.

As a starting point for this delightful 7-day trip, we have chosen the village of Sami, the most central for visiting the island.

Ready to leave? Have a good stay in Kefalonia !

On this 7-day trip we'll visit lots of fascinating sites and enchanting beaches. With our online guide everything will be easier, and after hiring a car, you just have to follow our itineraries daily.

Since the tourist season starts in May and ends in October, you'll have plenty of time to choose the period of your holidays.

Do not miss this opportunity full of attractions and fascinating places.

Both in Kefalonia and Ithaca, you will be amused by whimsical goats wandering about everywhere.



Interesting places

Today we'll visit the maritime museum, the Drogarati cave and Mount Aenos.

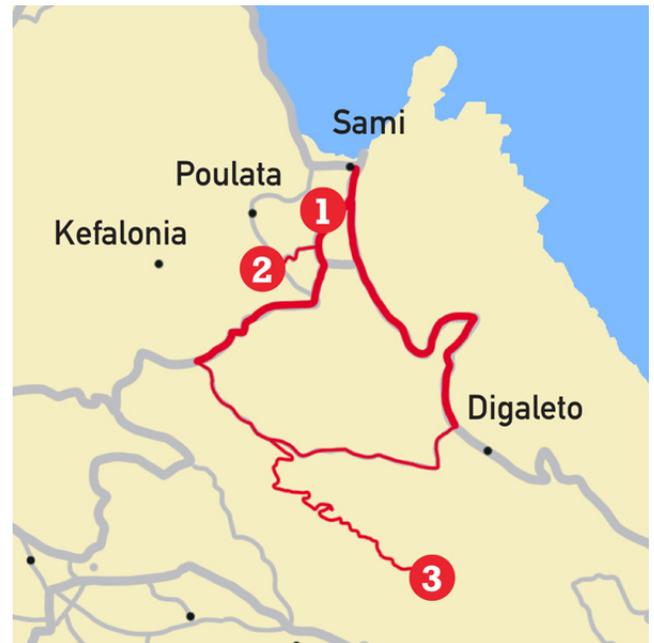
1) Maritime Museum

In this small museum you can admire the fabulous boats full of intricate details, amazing jewels built by the owner who with passion and love tells the story of each of them. An attraction for young and old.



2) Drogarati Cave

This underground cave is 15 million years old, accessed via a long staircase equipped with a handrail. Incredible the splendor that appears to the eyes between stalactites and stalagmites ! When it's very hot outside, temperatures never climb above 18° down here. Moreover, with its excellent acoustics, Drogarati Cave is a great venue for concerts ! Wear suitable shoes because dampness inside can make the ground slippery.



3) Mount Ainos

Mount Ainos, rising to a height of 1628 m, is the highest mountain in the archipelago and one of the most impressive in Greece.

In 1962 it was declared national park of Kefalonia, also in recognition of an indigenous species of fir tree that grows only here. The paths to reach the top are well marked and maintained, some steep sections, so wear mountain boots and remember to take water with you to drink along the way. The climb is challenging but the views you'll enjoy are worth the effort.



North of the island

A day full of emotions, the beautiful village of Fiskardo, the tumbledown Christian basilica, the picturesque village of Assos and the beaches of Emplisi, Kimilia and Myrtos.

1) The village of Fiskardo

Fiskardo is a small fishing village that miraculously escaped the earthquake of 1953, retaining its Venetian style features. Nearby is the lighthouse also in Venetian style and the remains of the Christian basilica. Chirping cicadas serenade us from all sides. Look for them on tree trunks and old stumps. Savor a tasty lunch in one of the village taverns or restaurants before continuing your drive.



2) Paralia Emplisi beach

Have fun at this little beach with its awesome turquoise water and luxuriant vegetation ! Accessible by car, there's also a shop for drinks and sandwiches.



3) Kimilia beach

You can walk to this beach through the holm oak forest in about 10' from the parking lot. Its tranquility and crystal-clear water will regenerate you ! Another 50 m and you'll discover a tiny cove even more peaceful, with a pebble beach.



5) The beach of Myrtos

Myrtos is one of the most beautiful beaches of Kefalonia. It's even said to be the queen of the Ionian islands !

Here there is room for everyone, big parking lot and plenty of space on the beach. The turquoise waters invite you to dive in and forget your worries.



4) Enchanting Assos

Assos is undoubtedly the most picturesque place on the island, located on a winding road.

The mainstay of this small village on the coast has always been fishing. Only in recent years has it begun to enjoy the arrival of tourism and has become a holiday spot.

A fortress overlooks the village, which formerly served as a defense against pirate attacks.

Today some ruins of the castle remain and from up there you can enjoy a breathtaking view.



Around Sami

Let's find out what to see around Sami.
Antisamos beach, Karavomilos lake, Melissani cave and Agia Effimia.

1) Antisamos Beach

The beach of Antisamos is equipped with umbrellas and bars and offers all kinds of water sports.
Surrounded by lush vegetation, it's an inviting place to relax and play, offering tourists all the amenities. Crowded in summer, but with room for everyone.



2) Melissani cave

The cave was discovered in 1951, but the 1953 earthquake caused the vault to collapse and it is now open to the sky.
Inside this cave there's a half salt water, half fresh water lake, where an underground spring mixes with the sea.
The sun's rays entering the cave create spectacular reflections from deep blue to turquoise to emerald green.
You can explore this dreamy place in small boats, where friendly rowers lead the way.



3) Lake Karavomilos

This lake is part of strange geological phenomena observed in Kefalonia.

Researchers have found that the waters on the other side of the island end up here after flowing under Kefalonia for some kilometers.

After visiting Melissani Cave, bring your children here, where they will love seeing the geese, ducks and fish that live in this lake.



4) Agia Effimia

Agia Effimia, located on the east coast of Kefalonia Island, is a seaside resort with a well-equipped harbor for those travelling by boat. There are lots of shops and restaurants.



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Excursion to Ithaca

Ithaca is one of the Greek islands, said to be the island of Ulysses, and so it attracts a lot of tourism. It can be reached by ferry in 35 minutes from Kefalonia by car or scooter.

Stavros with its statue of Ulysses, Frikes with its small harbour, pedestrianized Kioni, Anogi and its megaliths, Vathi appreciated by sailors.

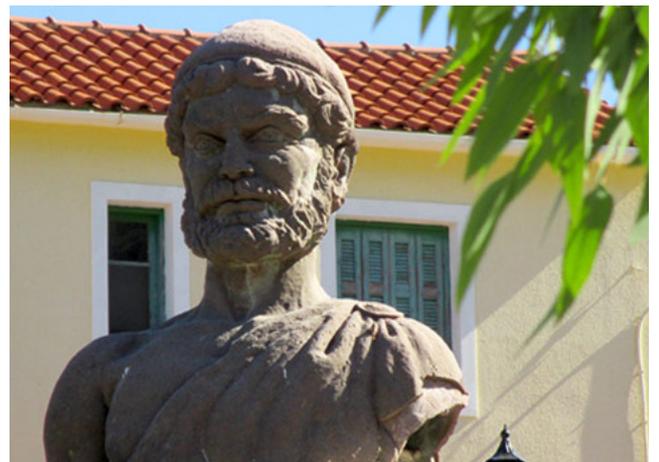
1) Stavros and Ulysses

Stavros is the largest village on Ithaca with 700 inhabitants.

In the village square you can admire the statue of Ulysses and visit a small museum a few meters away to learn about his stay on the island, according to mythology.

Above the village stop in at the archaeological museum, small but very interesting.

Below Stavros visit the tiny, picturesque fishing port with a small bar and remnants of a church.



2) Frikes

Frikes is a quiet, charming village with a small harbor where yachts dock in summer, with restaurants and small shops. Walk or drive along a dirt road for 3 kilometers to the beach of Marmakes and enjoy hiking trails nearby.



3) Kioni, a pedestrian resort

This is a resort for the wealthy, where huge cruise ships and yachts come to anchor in the summer. These travellers spend relaxing hours here in quayside bars and clubs. The local economy revolves around the port thanks to this type of tourism. The town is only pedestrianized in the summer.



4) Anogi, the oldest village

Anogi is the oldest village on Ithaca, with its impressive, distinctive Venetian bell tower. Next to it is the Church of the Virgin Mary, which contains old frescoes. But the menhirs of Anogi are certainly its most fascinating attraction. Many imposing boulders are scattered around fields outside the village. Tourists find these bizarre rock formations highly intriguing.



5) Vathi, popular with sailors

This is where all the ships dock, a pretty little town where the tourist finds everything he needs on holiday, mainly concentrated in the harbor area, considered one of the most beautiful in the Mediterranean. The archaeological museum of Vathi is worth a visit.



Argostoli, capital of the island

We reach Argostoli through the lush hinterland. On the way we can admire wind turbines up close and enjoy a wonderful view of Argostoli when we reach the church square just before Dilinata.



1) Visit Argostoli

There are many things to see in Argostoli : its pedestrian center full of shops, bars and restaurants, shops selling ceramics, local products and the Clock Tower.

Argostoli is the main centre of Kefalonia, founded by the Venetians in the 18th century. Visit the folklore museum and admire local costumes, furnishings, relics and coins.

Stroll along the waterfront, taking in the view of the harbor. Stop off at the fruit and vegetable stalls and visit the small fish market where fishermen sell the catch of the day.

Here, locals gather to chat and buy local produce, thus boosting the economy.

In the lagoon, if you're lucky, you can see loggerhead turtles or hire a pedal boat to go and look for them.

The De Bosset Bridge is a 700-metre-long stone bridge that was listed as a historical monument in 1970.

A fantastic day out !



2) The Memorial

A monument stands on the hill outside Argostoli in memory of the Italian fallen of the 'Acqui' Division.

It commemorates the massacre carried out by the Germans during the Second World War against Italian soldiers, which cost hundreds of lives.



3) Visit to the Gentilini Winery

Surrounded by vineyards is the Gentilini Winery. Here, in the shade of the trees, you can taste some local wines, accompanied by a plate of local products.

The cost varies according to the wines chosen. Originating from the island of Kefalonia, a well-known typical Greek white wine, 'Robola'. The Robola of Kefalonia is a PDO, i.e. with a protected designation of origin.

This wine is reputed to be the most famous of the island's culture.

Other wines produced by this winery are rosé and several reds.

The wine cellar is open every day.

4) Monastery of St Gerasimos

A very striking monastery of rare beauty, dedicated to St Gerasimos, the patron saint of the island of Kefalonia.

Not far from the village of Valsamata, in the valley of Omala, it rises majestically into the sky. Set in a large park, it is surrounded by the nuns' dormitories and a chapel with flowery avenues on either side.

If you want to visit the interior of the monastery or the nearby chapel, it is best to go in appropriate, non-beach style clothing. There is a peaceful atmosphere here.

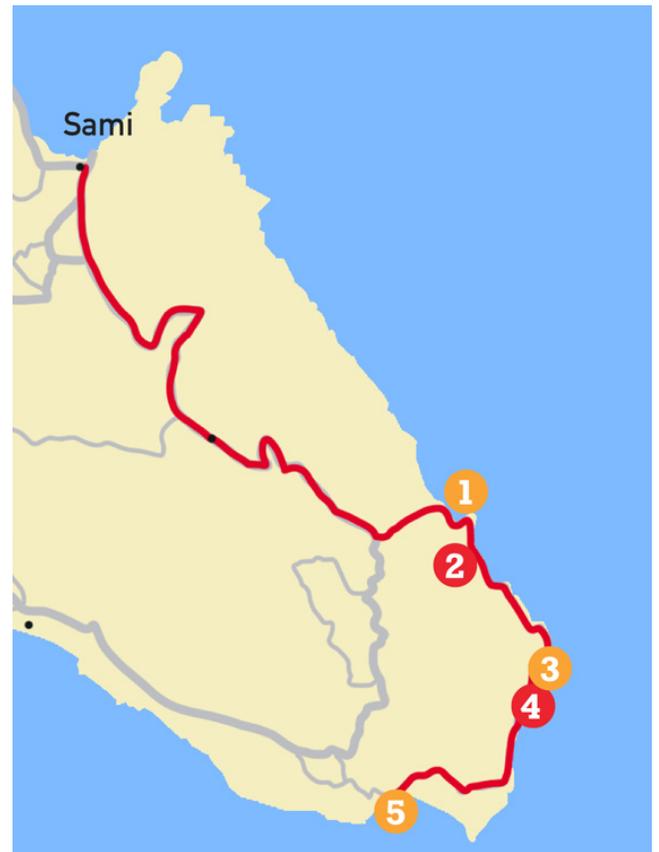


South of the island

Katelios Beach with its beautiful beach, the village of Poros, the waterfall of Potisti, the archaic temple and the Roman villa with mosaics are the attractions of this day, with lunch in a typical taverna for a break.

1) The village of Poros

In Poros you can stop for a coffee break and take a walk on the beach before setting off again.



2) Potisti waterfall

If it has rained for a few days you will certainly find the waterfall, but if it is a dry period you will only see the bed of the stream and the waterfall, where the rock is smooth and the water has left its mark.

It's nonetheless beautiful, even if there is no water ! It can be reached in five minutes from the car park.



3) The long beach of Skala

At the entrance of the village of Skala there are the ruins of an archaic temple and a very long, well-kept beach welcomes the tourist.

Some areas are free and some are private, but there is room for everyone on this beach of Kefalonia.

There is a beautiful pine forest behind the beach and in the town square, bars and restaurants.



4) The Roman vila

On the edge of the village of Skala are the remains of a Roman villa built in the 3rd century by a wealthy Roman.

The floor is covered with well-preserved mosaics depicting wild animals.

This ancient site is well worth a visit, small but very charming.



5) Katelios Beach

Katelios Beach is an ideal beach for those on holiday with children.

Here the water is shallow for a long stretch, there are no hazards and the beach is sandy.

The sea varies from deep blue to emerald green. Restaurants and bars complete the lovely setting.



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A walk on foot

A day of trekking and a visit to the acropolis of ancient Sami, lasting about 4 hours.

Departure is from the cemetery of Sami where the demarcated path is located.

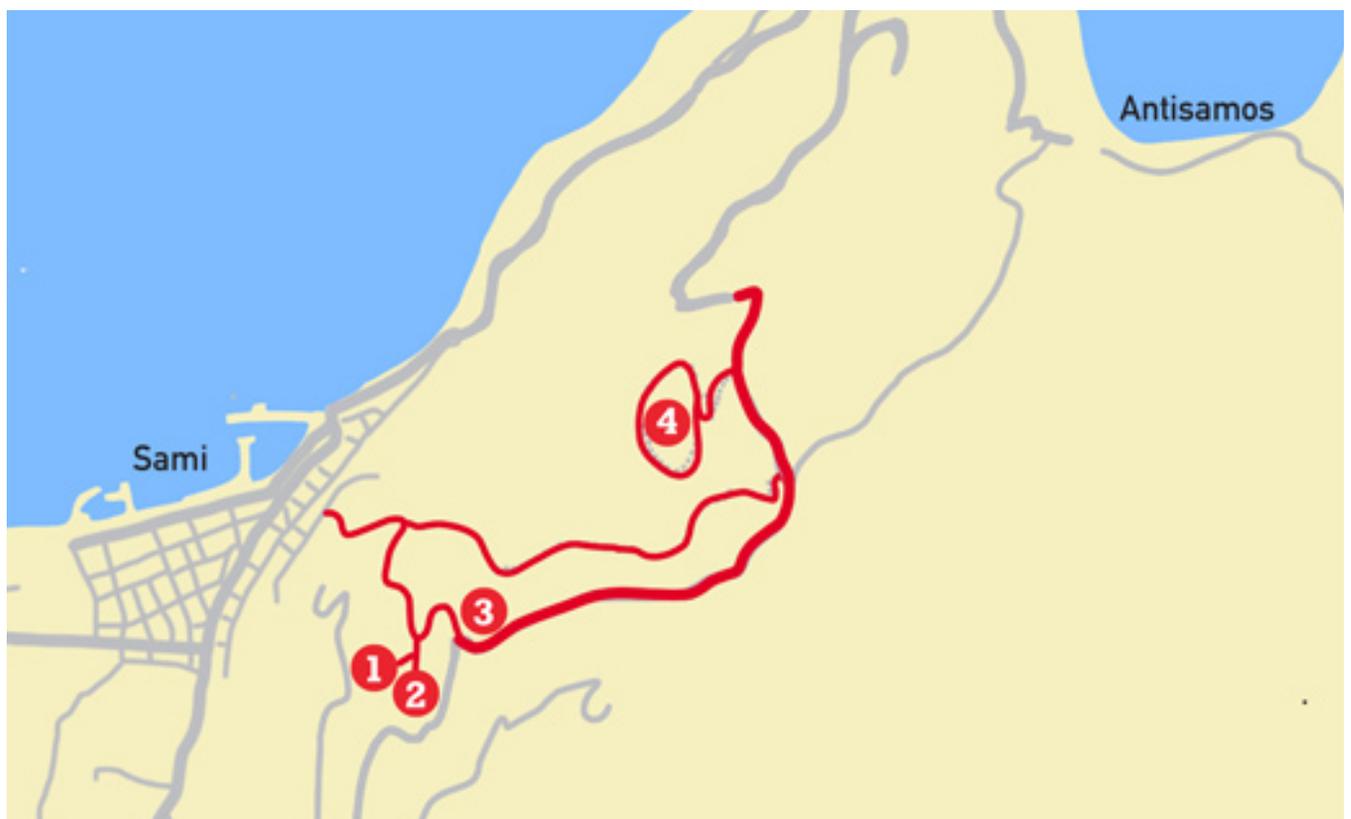
About 20 minutes from the start, in the shade of holm oaks and strawberry trees, there is a splendid view of Sami on the right.

At the fork in the road, continue to the right.

Along the way are the ruined church of San Nicholas, the spring, the monastery of San Fanentes, the acropolis of Sami, the remains of the castle and the return to the cypress forest.

1) Chapel of St Nicholas

Little remains of this chapel, some walls, but still visible and well-preserved frescoes on the walls. It is well worth a visit.



2) At the spring

Water always flows here even in a drought. It gushes out of the mountain into a rock basin and then flows into another basin where goats drink.

The water that comes out is drinkable, but the site has been abandoned and perhaps it would be better not to drink it.



3) San Fanentes Monastery

Some of the walls survived the 1953 earthquake, others lie on the ground in a heap of stones. The monastery was fortified and included a large tower.

To the side is the new church of San Fanentes.



4) The ancient acropolis of Sami

Ancient Sami was a fortified town in Kefalonia, and now only its ruins remain, lying up there folded in on themselves.

This city was an autonomous and independent state with its own currency, but lost its freedom and autonomy with the Roman siege.

A few meters further along the road on the left are the ruins of the castle, which was completely destroyed in the earthquake of 1953.



Follow the itinerary



For this unforgettable trip to Greece, below you will find the tourist map of the island of Kefalonia and Ithaca, with our free PDF itineraries, for you to do on your own.

Our advice on where to stay and rent a car will help you to enjoy this wonderful holiday.

These extraordinary places will enchant you and remain forever etched in your memories. You're going to leave a part of your heart on these two islands.

Not included in our itineraries:

The town of Lixouri

This charming town was almost entirely rebuilt after the earthquake. It can be reached by ferry from the port of Argostoli about every hour. Ideal for shopping in the numerous souvenir and handicraft shops. And for those who like swimming there are many free beaches nearby.

