



IOANNINA

OLD . NEW . YOU

GREECE



*Ioannina. A centuries old town
by a beautiful lake, in a ring of high
mountains by the sunny beaches
of the Mediterranean Sea.
A playground for numerous outdoor
activities, a place for quiet and peaceful
vacations, an ideal and modern
conference destination.*

*Less known. Less crowded.
Less spoiled. More varied.
More friendly. More charming.*

So what do you want to do first?



IOANNINA



A TOWN BY THE LAKE



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Six amazing museums, great café, bars and restaurants, art galleries, twelve churches, one synagogue, sixteen monasteries, twelve well preserved Muslim monuments, a primordial cave and an array of townhouses and public buildings of architectural interest. Grab your luggage and passport and come!



Located in the Northwestern part of the country, Ioannina sits in the center of a valley, amongst enormous mountains near a wonderful lake, just an hour from the sunny Ionian Pelago beaches. The town was built on the famous Egnatia Odos, the road that connects Europe with Asia, one of the most ancient routes in history, once used by the Persians and ancient Greeks.



Since the Stone Age, the ancient Greek civilizations, the Roman magistrates and the Byzantine despots through to the Ottoman pashas and the modern Greek democracy, the history trail leads to the unmissable attractions of today's multicultural Ioannina: six amazing museums, a unique primordial cave, art galleries, twelve churches, one synagogue, sixteen monasteries, twelve well preserved Muslim monuments, and an array of townhouses and public buildings of architectural interest.



Ride, wander, taste, LIVE!

The simplest experiences turn into something magical in Ioannina! A walk or a bike ride around the lake Pamvotida offers breathtaking views. Wander in the town and discover the silversmiths' shops. You will find the legendary craftsmen whose creations are known all over Europe. The local cuisine of Ioannina will satisfy the appetite of even the most demanding visitors. The pies and the pastries are known all throughout Greece. Every last bite is a mouthwatering reminder why Ioannina is a culinary crossroad between Europe and the East. Some experiences that you do not get to live everyday!



Ioannina is the city that never sleeps. And how can it sleep with more than 20,000 students living here? Happenings, parties and nightlife options are countless. Bars and clubs by the lake are unforgettable fun and relax experiences under the star lit night sky, or in a dreamy fog no matter if it is summer or winter.

Ioannina has something for everyone, whatever you are looking for!



Relaxing by the lake

Ioannina stands as one of the best offbeat escapes in Europe because of its view-alicious lake. Whether it's strolling hand in hand on its banks, birdwatching, riding a bike in the lightly used rural roads or enjoying your wine and good spirits by the serene waters in the sunset, the turquoise lake will offer the perfect backdrop for romance, family holidays, congresses and city breaks. Lake Pamvotida is one of the few urban lakes in Greece with a history going back 26.000 years! The unique location of the lake makes it one of the most beautiful in the country, with soft green banks and towering mountains all around it.



The island without a name

One of the few inhabited lake islands of Europe is here in Ioannina! It is the only inhabited island on the world without a name! It is called "Island In The Lake" or "Small Ioannina Island". It has a population of 250 inhabitants, mostly fishermen. It is filled with pine trees, unique stone houses, a natural port, full of fishing boats and it is the home of seven monasteries (the third largest group after Mount Athos and Meteora).

A time travel in 10 minutes

It is only a 10-minute boat trip from Molos, Ioannina to the No Name Island in the middle of Pamvotida Lake but it is a lifetime experience. Firstly, you notice the ever-changing views of the surrounding mountains that come closer and closer as they are mirrored in the lake. The magnificent Castle of Ioannina, the Arslan Mosque and the green island make a peerless view over the city, the lake and the island, everything in the crown of the surrounding mountains.

The horizon is getting bigger, water and sky are a single, deep blue. The lake marks the passage into another magical time and fills us with nostalgia. It's possible you will spend every minute snapping photos and taking in the awe-inspiring sights of one of the most interesting and spectacular scenery you will see in your life. You must do this trip in a foggy day!



“Living in a place that everyone wants to sightsee is a sign of good luck. I love to welcome tourists to the Island”



A new, different world

You walk along the lakefront and you feel relaxed, you see the lake and the town at the other side of the lake, you hear only birds singing, the sound of the water and reeds, your footsteps on the fallen leaves. At your own pace you climb the hill and gaze all the way you can.

Now you understand every myth and legend you have heard for this unique place. About the secret tunnel that connects the Island with the city of Ioannina or about the hole in the wooden floor of the monastery of Saint Panteleimon that was shaped by the bullet that killed Ali Pasha.

The two Byzantine monasteries, Filanthropinon and Stratigopoulou, have tremendous historical value. These two noble families, who built them, fled Constantinople after its fall to the Crusaders in 1204 and settled in Epirus. These stone made monasteries, with wooden temples and unique paintings of saints are some exquisite samples of art of Epirus, that combines the painting tradition of Crete with western styles.

That's what I call student life!

Ioannina University is one of the most attractive universities in Greece, because studying in Ioannina is a lot of fun. The town is large enough to offer a variety of activities, but small enough to feel like home. The distances are very short and the students are full of enthusiasm giving the town a unique buzz, ensuring you will always have good company. Many of the university students are from abroad. While strolling through the town's cobblestone streets, you can hear snippets of conversations in many languages.



IT IS IN OUR NATURE!



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Look around you!
You are just a 1-2h
drive from Ioannina
and it seems hard
to find the limit
of your choices.



Metsovo, Papigo, Aristi, Tsepelovo, Pysrsoyianni, Konitsa, Kalarrytes, Syrrako, Bourazani are among the villages where your camera has to be fully charged.

Discover estuaries teeming with wildlife, cross dense woodlands and brave deep gorges in off-the-beaten-track adventures; marvel at the stone-built bridges, churches (check Moni Kipinas, you'll be astonished) and cottages, taste good wine and delicious roasted casseroles in age old village squares, camp for the night stargazing over towering rock formations before the next morning's punishing push for the alpine lakes.

Your pages will definitely sport some great selfies with friends or family. Don't forget to take some on or under one of the amazing arched stone bridges. For your experience of Vicos Gorge, one of the largest, deepest and most impressive canyons in the world (in the Vicos-Aoos National Park, one of UNESCO's global geoparks), you'll have to write a book!



Villages in the mist

The vast mountains surrounding Ioannina are filled with surprises. One of the most beautiful is «the villages behind the mountains». There you can find 46 villages of incomparable beauty, drowned in vegetation. Stone is everywhere too, either as a part of the scenery or by human creation. You can barely tell one from the other!



Enjoy this truly amazing scenery, forever changing from East to West, alternating from low hills and lush green forests to bare mountains tops, fierce blue rivers and alpine lakes. A place like no other, where stone meets light, primitive meets beauty and ephemeral meets eternity. Man and Nature become One.



You'll come back again...

Nature lovers from all over Europe come to Zagori. Most of them return again and again, while some of them buy an old stone house so as to restore it and stay permanently in a natural paradise. In older times they would construct stone streets or build stone houses, stairs and bridges. Nowadays this is not necessary. The network connecting the villages is large and time-tested. There are numerous stone bridges, more that everywhere else in Greece. Today they are more than 60, three times less than the time of their prosperity, in the 18th century.



Metsovo

The capital of the mountains is Metsovo. It is a historic village with large villas and cobbled streets, built in a beautiful location. Metsovo has a great history and splendid places to sightsee, such as museums, old churches and monasteries. It is the ideal place for relaxation, delicious culinary experiences, a base for outdoor action excursions and a popular market of unique local products.



Unknown, unspoiled Tzoumerka

Not as crowded as Zagorochoria, the villages in Tzoumerka are jewels of tradition in the nature. Pramanta, Katsanohoria, Sirako, Kalarites. Villages perched on Athamanika Mountains, a part of amazing landscapes that you would love to keep in your memory and in your camera's memory too. The nature is simply wonderful there. Dozens of rivers, deep gorges, rocks, bare top mountain peaks and wonderful stone bridges. Wondering where to start?

The truffle hunting experience

Truffle is the fruiting body of a rare subterranean fungus, which grows on the roots of trees like or hazel, pine, oaks, willows and firs. The wild truffle hunting is an outstanding outdoor activity and an once-in-a-lifetime experience in nature. It can last 10 hours!

Let's get wild!

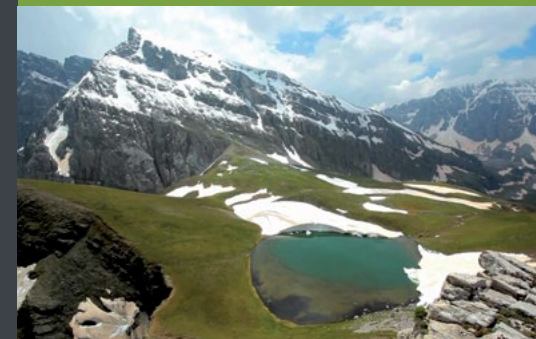
Take the trails up to the rugged Pindos and Tzoumerka mountain ranges or down to the rivers Aaos, Viodomatis, Arachthos and Kalamas. Cross the forest to the largest waterfall in Greece,



The beautiful alpine lakes in Mountains Tymfi and Smolikas called Dragon Lakes are only accessible by foot!

They are remnants of the Ice Age according to scientists, or the dwelling places of dragons fighting each other according to tradition.

called Kefalovriso. Go rafting in the canyons of Arachthos River, climb, find your unique path to go from a village to another through the woods, hike Tzoumerka, try every extreme sport, even mountain biking, horse riding and rides with 4x4 vehicles, always accompanied by experienced guides and drivers. Pure adrenaline! The three ski resorts of Pindos are offering a wide range of winter activities, such as ski and snowboard. You are welcome in this nature's playground for the whole family, for children and adults, for experienced and amateurs. Then, just relax in a mountain resort for a bit of glitz and you are ready to go again!





A FOUR SEASON DESTINATION



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It is very rare to find a place like Ioannina, a place that offers exceptional options for visitors all year around.

An island in the Mediterranean Sea. A chalet hidden in the Alps. A historic building, a sacred pilgrimage, a beautiful panoramic view. There are many great places all over Europe, perfect for in-season visiting. But it is extremely rare to find a place perfect for holidays in every season of the year, a place so beautiful all year round, such as Ioannina.



Winter Tales

During the winter months, indulge with a hot coffee in the Castle or a Greek meze in a tavern by the lake, overlooking the mountains. Take a tour of the snowy mountain of Mitsikeli, visit Metsovo, Zagorohoria, or one of the countless villages on Tzoumerka Mountains. Try extreme sports like snowmobiling or go skiing in one of the three ski resorts in the area of Metsovo, Anilio and Vasilitsa. Time for fun and action!



Spring Blooms

In spring everything in Ioannina blooms. The trademark beauty of the natural environment of Ioannina reaches its peak. The flowers and blossoming trees make the city look like a real life painting. The melted snow fills the rivers, turning every walk through the paths of the Vikos-Aoos National Park a truly amazing experience. Pass over the traditional stone bridges over the roaring



ivers, that's something you'll never forget! Nature celebrates life with a feast of colors, smells and sounds. It is the best time of year to hike the Vikos Canyon! Try it!



***The temperature of the river waters is 4 °C throughout the year!
Do you dare to jump?***

Summer is Magic

After the vibrant smells and colors of spring, here comes the famous Greek summer! Summer in Ioannina has two options of relaxing and fun. You can choose the traditional way down the Ionian Pelago coasts at Sivota and Parga, or, if you are the adventurous type of person, you can discover your own isolated beach and camp. Now you have the sun, the sand and the sea all to yourself! The second type of summer is a cooler one in the city of Ioannina and in the surrounding mountains. You can walk around and tour the sights of the town, have a boat ride in the peaceful lake, visit the island, or, if you dare, you can go for a swim in the rivers Aoo, Voidomatis, Arahthos and Kalamas. You should know that the water temperature is around 4 degrees Celsius all year around! Do you dare a jump? The best trend of summer are the dozens of «panigiria», local, traditional feasts, which offer an once in a lifetime opportunity to have fun and dance the night away under the stars. If you are lucky enough, you'll dance under August's Full Moon. Opa!

Peaceful Autumn

If there is a season that fits Ioannina the best, it's autumn season. In autumn the town's mystery reaches its full glory. Rain, fog, and a rug of fallen leaves. This is the scenery around the lake. It's like the town has time-travelled to previous, old times. Everything is beautiful, it's like you are living in a painting, made with a lot of orange and purple color. If the town seems colorful to you, you must see the surrounding mountains! Spend an autumn night in a motel in the Big or Small Papigo and in the morning try the path to the Dragon Lakes. An experience you will never forget!





What are the loannina's must-do if you have only one day there? Let us give you some hints!

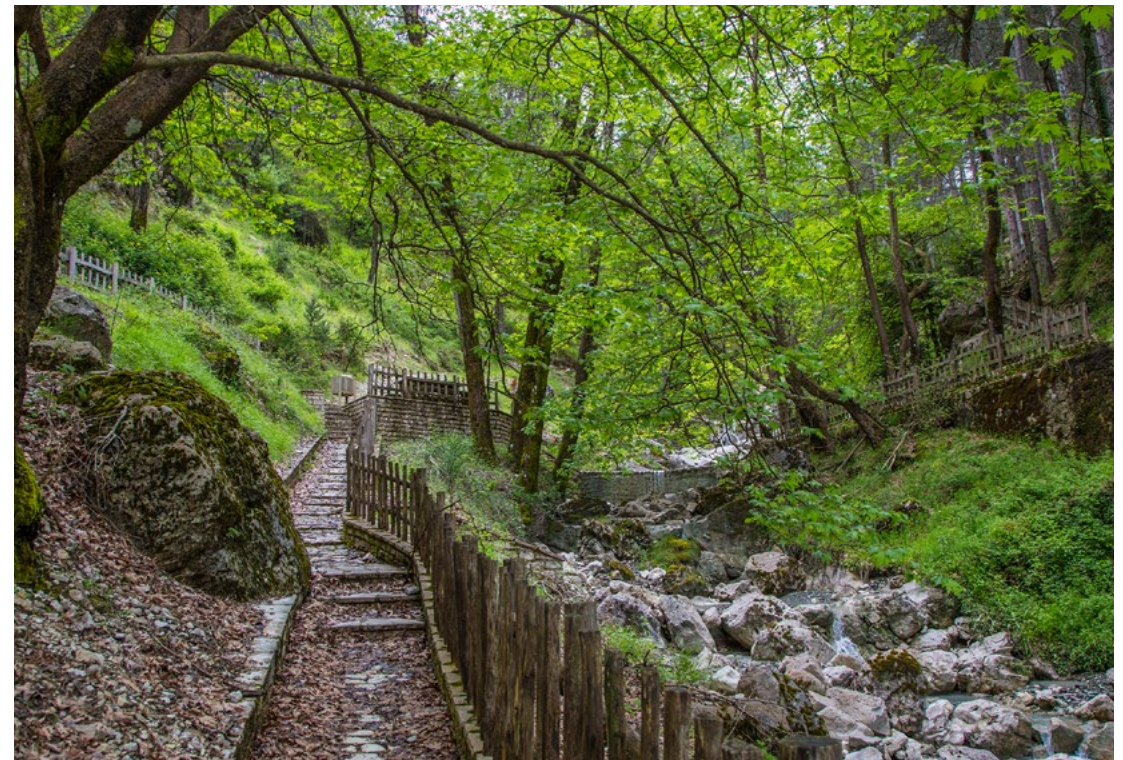
A hot, summer day in loannina

There is no better way to start a summer day in loannina than an early morning walk near the lake. Keep in mind that loannina is not the usual Mediterranean destination with the extremely hot summers. The altitude of the town, the mountains that surround the valley and the mountain water create a cooler microclimate. Enjoy a cold coffee (maybe a Greek frappe), or a housemade herb cold tea in one of the town's small cute cafes before you keep up your wander in the castle and the cobblestone alleys. It's noon already and it's time to take the boat to the picturesque island of the lake, to enjoy some traditional meze of the lake, like frogs and eels with a glass of tsipouro. While on

the island, you must have a walk around, admiring the traditional architecture of the houses, the churches and the monasteries and buy some unique souvenirs. If you want a cool break in a hot afternoon, visit a pool of one of the big, luxury hotels of the town, for a swim, some sunbathing and great refreshing cocktails. The night is falling in loannina and the best way to enjoy the sunset is having by your side the ones you love and a mouthwatering authentic gianniotiko baklava on your table! The summer night is promising and wonderful. Have an elegant bottle of wine under the moonlight, near the lake or a stronger drink in the town's numerous bars and clubs, full of students.

An unforgettable winter day in loannina

Dress well and start your day off with a walk. Wander in the market, the castle, the cobblestone roads, see the churches and the historical sights, the museums and the silversmith's shops. There are endless choices but, don't worry, see everything in your own pace. Only 15 minutes from the town center you will find Pavlos Vrellis Museum of wax effigies, an amusing way of learning the history of loannina. Near loannina you will find Perama Cave, a great trip to the geological past in the depths of the earth. Time for a break! Let's have a hot cup of coffee in front of the lake, enjoying a mouthwatering traditional pastry watching the incredible view of the lake and the mountains mirrored in it. Time to eat and there are great choices in the town or in the island in the center of the lake. Try a local wine combined with fried frog legs and eel, or delicious meat and cheese, all made in Epirus. Late at night, we have a drink in the small, cozy bars of the town. Who cares for the cold night outside?



TOP 10 HIGHLIGHTS



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1 Once upon a castle

What gate you walk through to enter the castle, does not matter. By entering into this, the city bustle stays outside. A traditional settlement is scattered through the Ottoman buildings like Soufari Seraglio and Aslan Pasha mosque, which houses the municipal museum and the Jewish synagogue. This fairy tale castle is full of legends.

A crossroad of cultures and religions, the castle was built in 528 by Emperor Iustinianus. And high above, the Kale, the Acropolis: a cultural park with small museums and collections. In summer this is the area of cultural heart of the city, with concerts and other events that take place.

Don't forget to visit the Silversmithing Museum that presents the technology of silversmithing through its timeless dimension and describes the intricate meshing between the tools and techniques used, highlighting the socio-economic context in which the local workshops evolved.



2 A time travel in 10 minutes

It is only a 10-minute boat trip from Molos, to the Island but it is a lifetime experience. You enter the boat and suddenly everything changes as the small trip begins. First you notice the ever-changing views of the surrounding mountains that come closer and closer as they are mirrored in the lake. The horizon grows, water and sky are a single, deep blue. The magnificent Castle of Ioannina, the Arslan Mosque and the green island make a peerless view. It's possible you will spend every minute snapping photos and taking in the awe-inspiring sights of one of the most interesting and spectacular scenery you will see in your life.

3 Strange forms of nature

Just some minutes drive away from Ioannina (4km), the village of Perama is located. There is one of the most spectacular caves in Europe. Get ready for an unforgettable experience! The 1,5-million-year-old Perama Cave is so beautiful that many visitors, full of awe, consider that this beauty can not occur without human intervention. There are thousands of stalagmites and stalactites, in different varieties, types and formations. No one can compete nature in originality! The most famous stalagmite in the cave of Perama is the Cross, but you can see the «Statue of Liberty» and «Santa Claus».

4 Ionian summer stories

Greece without the sea and the sun is not Greece. Just one hour away from Ioannina, through the brand new Egnatia Odos Highway, there are some of the best coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, that offer numerous leisure and relaxation options. Welcome to the Ionian Coast! Discover countless beaches on a 60km coastline. Find small, isolated, almost hidden bays, where you will be alone with the sun, the sand and the sea. You may enjoy a huge variety of water sports



for every taste and pocket like surfing and diving. Not a surfer? No problem! Lounge on the sandy beach, visit a vibrant beach bar with loud music, suntanned bodies dancing and long drinks and cocktails from early morning until several hours after sundown. Choose what you want to do first! What would a Greek summer be without the picturesque seaside taverns with Mediterranean cuisine? Come out of the sea, sit on the table and order fresh fish, one salad and ouzo. After that lick an ice cream cone or three. So simple, so beautiful, so Greece!



5 The theatre by the oracle

Imagine a sold-out drama (-tic) performance 2300 years ago in a theatre seating 18.000 spectators! What kind of cultural life do you think they had back then? What kind of economy could afford the biggest theatre of its time? You may ponder on these questions on the way from Ioannina to Dodoni (22km) and one of the most significant archaeological sites in Greece. During classical antiquity, priestesses and priests in the sacred grove interpreted the rustling of the oak leaves to determine the correct actions to be taken. Some claim that the oracular sound originated from bronze objects hanging from oak branches and sounded with the wind blowing, similar to a wind chime.

6 Made of stone

In Zagorohoria you'll find more than 60 traditional, picturesque bridges made of stone. More than anywhere else in Greece. Imagine than in the 19th century they were 150-200! The construction of every each one was great news for all the residents of Epirus villages. When the bridge had ready, they attended a special celebration. During the celebration they tested the construction. They filled big sacks with stones, loaded them on mules and lead them to the center of the bridge to test if it could stand the weight. It was a huge disgrace for the master builder if the bridge collapsed. The most important stone bridges nowadays are Plaka Bridge, Papastathis Bridge, Politsa Bridge, Plakida Bridge, Konitsa Bridge, Kokoris Bridge, Kaber Aga Bridge and Paltsi Bridge.

7 A holy adventure

Kipina Monastery in Kalarites, Tzoumerka, is one of the most impressive monasteries in Greece. The small church made of wood and stone, built inside a rock, will leave you speechless. The monastery was built in about 1212. The car road reaches the base of the cliff and then, if you want to go to the monastery, you must follow a path carved into the rock and a wooden bridge. During Ottoman Empire, the monks raised the wooden bridge to be protected from the raids. The small church of the monastery is filled with beautiful 17th century frescoes. Visiting Kipinas Monastery is one of the must do things, if you visit Ioannina. It is an experience you will never forget!



The visit to Kipina Monastery is an once-in-a-lifetime experience!



8 A gorgeous gorge

Welcome to a World Guinness Record canyon! The 24km length Vikos Gorge is one of the largest, deepest and most spectacular gorges in the world. You will be astonished of the great variety and alternation of different ecosystems, a feast of flora and fauna. The Gorge is one of the few remaining wildlife refuges in Europe in almost pristine condition, hosting 133 species of birds and 24 mammals. Yes, you may see a baby bear climbing the rocks next to you! The best way to see Vikos Gorge is to follow the well-marked trail in the Gorge. It's a six-hour incredible route, suitable for first-timers. You should try it! Calm and peaceful and then frightening and exciting, intense and unexpected. In Vikos Gorge you will cover such a broad range of experiences. Vikos Gorge is an UNESCO geopark since 2010. All geoparks in Europe are 69.

9 Mouthwatering pastries

With the world famous gianniotiko baklava you are in for a real treat: the local genre bridges the oriental dessert traditions with the less-sweet-tooth Europeans: an icon of the Ioannina culture! A lightly buttered paper-thin «phyllo» dough is deftly rolled by hand, not too loose-not too tight, layer over layer, to evenly wrap the fillings of the recipes (nuts, spices and dried fruits) and make sure they will bake to a perfect aromatic blend. Delicious! You must try the «Sker Burek» (the Turkish word for sugar cake) too or other local mouthwatering sweets, extraordinary flavours that you will never forget. I want to try them all!

10 Delicious food. Great wines.

Eating out is one of the great pleasures of life and one of the greatest joys of travel. Ioannina is a unique place for food fans with an appetite for genuine Mediterranean cuisine and traditional home cooking. Talented chefs, superb local products, great value. These are the ingredients of Ioannina Gastronomy, one of the tastiest food scenes in Greece.

There is nothing in a new city like visiting new restaurants and having new culinary experiences. The local gastronomy you can sample almost everywhere in town and in nearby taverns includes cheese and meat from hilltop farms (don't miss the smoked Metsovone, semi-hard PDO cheese), herb flavored pies, fish and game, fine local wines and tsipouro.

Have a glass of wine. Or three!

Ioannina produces a small but significant amount of Greece's total wine production. Zitsa and Metsovo have put Ioannina on the winemaking map.

Wine cultivation in Ioannina dates back to the 16th century. Did you know that Lord Byron, the famous poet, was one of the many enthusiasts of Zitsa's signature wine? You must try this semi-sweet rose wine, known for its subtly spicy flavour.

Zitsa, thanks to the tradition and reputation it had in wine making from old times, has been characterized as an area with «Appellation d' Origine de Qualite Superieure» wines. The composition and relief of the terrain, the elevation between 600 and 700 meters, the weather conditions and the uniqueness of the white variety of Debina grapes give to the renowned wine of the region a rich and fine aroma, a smooth and pleasant taste.

In addition to the local Debina variety, two other red varieties-the «Vlachico» and the «Bekari» are also cultivated. The red to white grape ratio is approximately 9 to 1. Ioannina is a must-visit place for all wine lovers!



A FAIRYTALE HISTORY



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↘
Stoa Louli was built in 1875. Initially it was an inn and later it became the place, where people gathered from across Epirus, to start the great (back then) trip to Athens. This non stop motion of these people made Stoa Louli a mall.

A multicultural city

If you walk in Ioannina, you'll definitely see yourself how multicultural town Ioannina is, this is not only in old people narrations. Churches with remarkable architecture, mosques and a synagogue, the largest in Greece, testify this multicultural character of the city. The population exchange after the Minor Asia destruction and annihilation of most Jews by the Germans changed the proportions of the population. Muslims may not exist today and the Jews may be few, only those who survived the concentration camps, but the city did not throw off this part of the identity. Today, there are four mosques, three of them very well preserved, while the Jewish synagogue, built in 1826, continues to exist and be the largest and most beautiful of the surviving religious buildings of the Greek Jews.



Location, antiquity, Christian times

The town of Ioannina is built on the west bank of Lake Pamvotis. A rocky peninsula, which leads northeast and southeast in two heights, was the core of the city historically and spatially. This naturally fortified position was extra fortified in the Hellenistic period, as evidenced by a wall section, revealed under Ottoman and Byzantine fortifications near the main gate of the castle. The great religious center of Dodoni lies a few kilometers from the city of Ioannina. In 168 AD the Roman conquest of Epirus follows and Roman findings of the excavations in the Castle of Ioannina witness continued habitation in this period. The lack of archaeological and historical data for the first years of Christianity is completed by the quest for the etymology of the name of Ioannina. Most scholars attributed it to a settler John or to a monastery dedicated to St. John. In a sense, not adequately documented, the -ina suffix is considered Slavic origin, which was attributed to the town during the period of the first Slavic invasions (late 6th-7th c.).



↘
The collections of the Archaeological Museum of Ioannina are developed in seven halls, the central corridor and three terraces, a total area of 1,200 sqm. The exhibits cover a long period, from the first appearance of man in Epirus, during the Lower Palaeolithic age 250,000 years ago, until the twilight of late antiquity in the late Roman period (3rd century AD)..



↳ Located on the Island and is housed in the cells of the monastery of Ag. Panteleimonas, where Ali Pasha was murdered in 1822. The collection includes exhibits from the pre-revolutionary period, memorabilia from the era of Ali Pasha etc.



↳ Municipal Ethnographic Museum Ioannina is located in the castle and is housed in the mosque of Aslan Pasha built in the early 17th century. The Mosque of Aslan Pasha was the core of a large religious - educational complex, from which survives the homonym Tourbes (mausoleum), the Mendreses (seminary) and Mageiria (outbreak).

Byzantins and Ottomans
 After the conquest of Constantinople by the Franks in 1204 Michael I Komnenos Doukas founded the so-called «Domain of Epirus». Expiring the 13th century, the city of Ioannina is an important center of the region with a strong wall, temples and mansions. At that time the island becomes an important monastic center. The well-known Byzantine families Filanthropinos and Stratigopoulos establish monasteries dedicated to Saint Nicholas. The 16th century is characterized by demographic and great spiritual growth. The city's population reached 7000 inhabitants. An educational institution operates in the Castle and the island remains a monastic and spiritual center. Ioasaf Philanthropinos renovates the Filanthropinon monastery, which is decorated with important frescoes in 1542 and 1560. During the same period the monastery Strategopoulos is decorated with murals. After 1611 the city is dominated by the Muslim population. In the castle the complex of the mosque of Aslan Pasha is founded in 1618 in the northeastern citadel. Evliya Çelebi in 1670 describes a welfare image of Ioannina.

The period of Ali Pasha (1708-1822)
 In 1788, Ali Pasha was officially appointed Pasha of Ioannina. In important positions he used Greek notables of the region and has a positive attitude towards Ioannina merchants and craftsmen. During this period, the Giannina were an important center of trade and handcraft laboratory of the Balkans. Merchants and craftsmen were operating on the Danube, Western Europe, Russia and Egypt on basic types leather, textiles, weapons and silverware items. During Ali era, the city acquired European interest, with the establishment of consulates, international trade and high acquaintances of the ruler. Population growth was noted and its inhabitants reached twenty and in others thirty thousand. In Ioannina a powerful castle, the resplendent seraglio of Ali and the Fethiye Mosque were built or rebuilt. In the foothills of northeastern citadel, a large building for the riding school, the famous Soufari Seraglio was built. Many of the scholars of the 17th, 18th and 19th century originated or were active in the region, such as Methodius Anthracite, Balanos Vassilopoulos, Neophytos Doukas, Athanassios Psallidas, Ioannis Vilaras.

The city became a cultural center thanks to renowned schools, most of which were legacies of emigrants. Epiphanius School, Great School, Kaplaneios School, Zosimaia School. Also, the city became the center of distribution of books, which were printed in the Greek printing houses in Venice. In July 1820 the Sultan declared Ali apostate and in August the siege of the city that lasted eighteen months began. The economy and the daily lives of residents were overturned. Many people from Ioannina fled to nearby areas such as Zagori, Island, Metsovo, Arta and Thesprotia. Ali, unable to prevent the departure of residents, burned much of the city and especially the market, while Albanians were looting. The destruction of the city followed during the siege resulting in the impoverishment of households. With the amnesty, which was granted after the death of Ali, many refugees returned to Ioannina. Suleiman Pasha invited craftsmen to rebuild the destroyed workshops, to recast the city tax. Traders did not especially respond.



The Liberation Years

Ioannina were liberated from the Turks in 1913. The city and the wider region was a key contribution during the Greek-Italian war of '40. In recent decades there has been a great demographic and economic growth. The current physiognomy of the city and the surviving monuments offer little and uneven testimony of history. Persecution and destruction of Christians after the revolution of 1611 swept monuments of the resplendent Byzantine period, as well as those of the early post-Byzantine era, while the scattered extramural monuments often were degraded in the unregulated and dense layout of the new city.

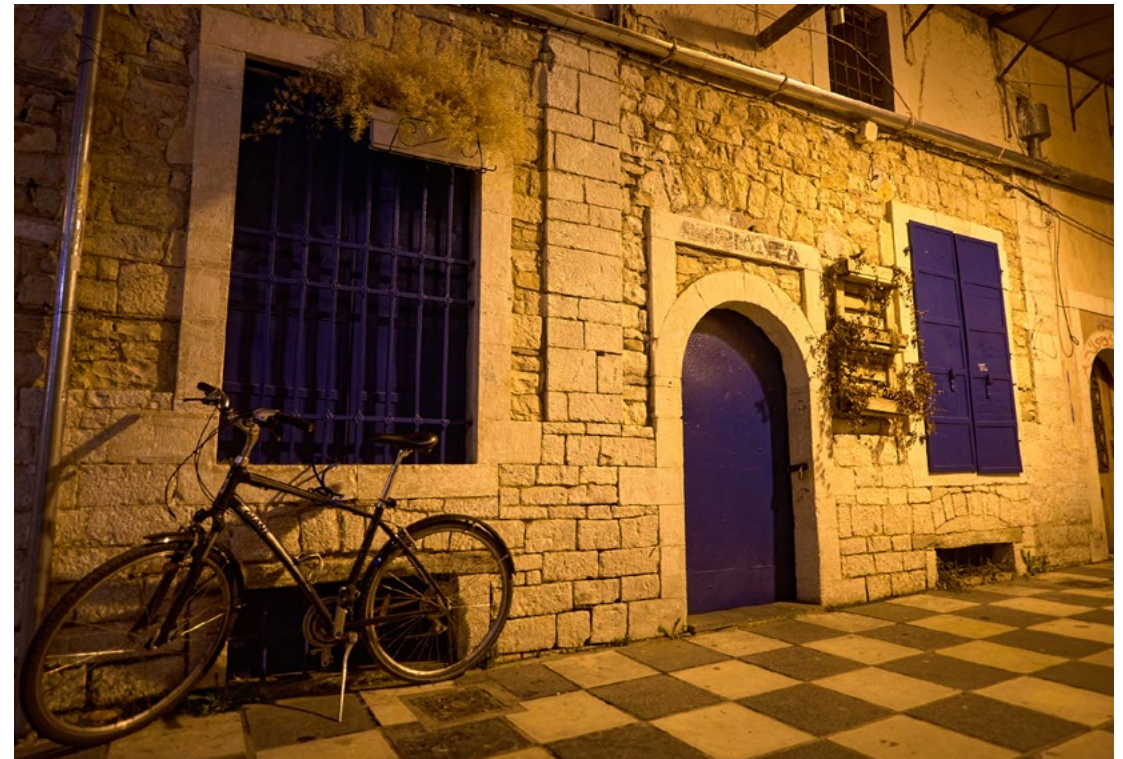
↳ The «Greek History Museum» is located outside Bizani in Ioannina. 150 wax models, life size, and embedded in a true representation of the environment of their era, mainly revived forms of modern Greek history, in thematic sections.

The great silversmiths

This was the basic income of Ioannina people in 17th and 18th century. Ioannina was a silvermithing center, well known all over Europe. The famous silversmiths create various objects, like cooking utensils, tools and weapons. Nowadays, the new silversmiths and goldsmiths still use the techniques of previous generations but they make their own path in this great art's history. Wander in the cobblestone streets of Ioannina and find the authentic silversmiths. Buy something beautiful to yourself or gift it to the people you love.



↳ Don't forget to visit the Silversmithing Museum within the Castle of Ioannina (Its Kale). The main objective of the permanent exhibition is to present the technology of silversmithing through its timeless dimension and to describe the intricate meshing between the tools and techniques used.



THE FEAST OF FIVE SENSES

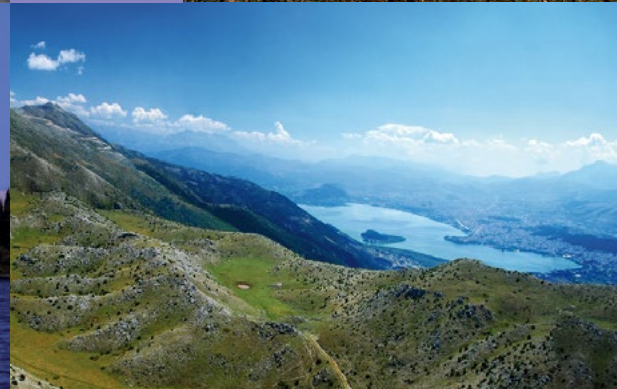


IOANNINA
OLD . NEW . YOU
GREECE



Every visit to Ioannina is a life experience, you'll never forget.

The unique combination of natural beauty, history, tradition and entertainment, a place full of sounds, tastes and odors tickles all your senses.



Eye-catching Images

Ioannina is a stunning, eye-catching place. You can never have enough pictures or videos of this. The city, the lake, the island and the mountains are part of a unique landscape, a feast to your eyes! Blue is everywhere as a color and a sensation too. Look at the Lake Pamvotis! With the lake surface reflecting sky blue, the lake and the sky seem to be one and undivided. Add the reflection of the surrounding mountains in the lake and get the fairy tale. Landscape there is amazing, you won't believe it is true.

You can now leave the lake and head to the mountains. You will experience a riot of colors, millions of them forever changing under the sun. The palette is endless, different in every season. The harder colors of autumn and winter are changing into the spring color explosion and the summer harmony under the sun.

But there are many more stunning images that are not related to the nature but to human creation. The beautiful town of Ioannina and its countless attractions, like museums, churches, caves and the great Ancient Theatre of Dodoni or the hospitable people of Ioannina. Beauty that never ends.



Beyond The Sound

Sounds of nature harmoniously intermingle with the people talks and children laughs in the streets of Ioannina.

Take a quick tip for happiness: Make nature sounds a part of your day, like the people of Ioannina. The leaves of the big lake trees rustle in the summer breeze. You can hear the running creek babbling in your autumn walk, even if you are miles away. The river Aaos is roaring under a traditional stone bridge in Zagorohoria. You can almost hear the sound of the snow under your boot in Metsovo ski resort or walking in a snowy cobble path towards the traditional square of a mountain village.

Let's go back in the lively town of Ioannina, the home of 20.000 students. It's a vibrant city that never sleeps. Walk in the cobbled streets of Ioannina and hear the heart of the city beating eternally, fueled by the students' adrenaline and energy.



Singing and dancing are intertwined, inseparable and a part of everyday life. Weddings, baptisms, celebrations and festivals come alive with singing and dancing. You hear wherever you go Greek folk songs that express joy and celebration in a festive mood.

Just test the acoustics in the Ancient Theater of Dodoni and learn about the significance of sound in the Ancient Oracle, near the theater. You'll talk for years about it!



The Touch of Nature

Ioannina is made by stone. Stone is everywhere, either formed by nature or by humans. Bridges, houses, street roads, stairs, the Ancient Theater of Dodoni. Icy during the winter or hot in the summer, stone is a tool, an embellishment or even a barrier we have to overcome or conquer by... climbing it! Another natural element found plenty in the land of Ioannina is water, thanks to the geomorphology of Epirus, that is characterized by severe mountainous terrain and the abundance of surface water. You should feel the water beneath your hands in Ioannina Lake or at the bank of one of the mountain rivers. If you want something more extreme, try a refreshing swim in the all-year-frozen waters of Kolimbithres. Not for the faint hearted!

Don't forget the miles of beaches at the deep blue Ionian Sea, quiet and secluded or bustling with activity. Feel free to play with the white sand, near the turquoise water and the sheer white cliffs. What a magical setting it is!



Ioannina Aromas

In the natural ecosystem of Ioannina you smell the scents of nature and you feel great! Smell the autumn leaves as the winter winds prevail to prepare earth for the spring and summer feast.

If you visit Zagorohoria, nature's purity makes the aromas even brighter. Earth, leaves, trees, rivers, soil. Take a quick return to Mother-Nature, away from everyday life thoughts, a redemptive, cleansing experience.

Suddenly, while you enjoy the gentle fragrance of the forest flowers, you smell food cooking in a distance. Somewhere near you a handmade, herb-flavored, cheese (or meat) pie is baked! You won't stop yourself of having a second piece of it. Yummy!



Have a glass of wine and order something to eat. You'll experience Mediterranean cuisine at its best!

Authentic Ioannina Tastes

Epirus foods are the rademarked Mediterranean cuisine at its best. There is no one who will say no to a famous Epirus pie, or a mouthwatering Gianniotiko baklava sweet, full of syrup. There are literally hundreds of places to enjoy great Epirus food, suitable for every wallet. If you want something more special, try the lake's fried frog legs and fresh eels. What would a meal be without a special wine? Ioannina produces some of the greatest Greek wines. Debina grapes at Zitsa make one of the best white variety wines.

Epirus has a great tradition in making cheese and many of the products are Protected Designation of Origin products that means that you can not find products like them nowhere! Try the local feta cheese, the semi-hard smoked Metsovone, the delicious anthotiros and the spicy vasilotiri cheese.



CALM OR WILD?



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Ioannina is the ideal destination for both absolute relax moments and intense fun times.

If you love tranquility in your vacations, Ioannina is your place. Is there anything more idyllic and quiet than a sunset in front of Ioannina Lake? The paces calm down, man and nature become one like the colors in the horizon line. The blue of the sky slowly becomes one with the blue of the lake, while the sun disappears behind the eternal mountains. Nature looks like it calms with us too. You'll wish you could stop the time.

As the night falls, the scene is changing, as the night in Ioannina has all the features of the famous Greek night: fun and promising. In Ioannina there is a (non so secret) bonus. The city hosts one of the largest university communities in the country. We are talking for about 20,000 people. That makes Ioannina a town that never sleeps. There are countless options for entertainment. Have a drink in a bar near the lake or in an old building in the market's small cobblestone roads. Enjoy a signature cocktail or a glass of wine at popular clubs dancing until dawn. Let's have one more!

See you in the Wild!

A few kilometers away, up in the great mountains, you are in the wild, but in a different way than town's wild nightlife. Roaring rivers with white foaming water rushing down edgy slopes, drifting huge rocks. You stand on a small trail, somewhere between Zagorohoria Villages, a vast playground for extreme sports no matter the season. Canoe kayak in Voidomatis, climbing in Papigo, swimming in alpine Drakolimni. There is everything you'll ever imagine doing in the wild. You are in a geopark with dozens of protected species of animals and plants and breathtaking views. Look at the opposite cliff! You see the bear climbing? It can't be wilder than that!

But you can see the calm atmosphere of Zagorohoria too. Same place, completely different experience. Have a trip to the stone villages, enjoy a handmade pie and a glass of wine in a small, picturesque cafe, talk with the few but incredibly hospitable village residents and, maybe, stay in the night at their house enjoying the famous Greek hospitality.



Calm or wild? We could ask ourselves this a million times in every place of Ioannina; in the city, near the lake, on the mountains, during our stay at the beaches. It's up to you. Choose a swim in an isolated beach in Ionian Pelago or sit in front of a fireplace in a refuge covered by fresh snow somewhere in Zagorochoria. Is this calm or is this wild? You'll find the answer in Ioannina. Let's go!



Time for ACTION!

Camp for the night stargazing over towering rock formations before the next morning's punishing push for the alpine lakes; go skiing or 4X4 riding, take the trails up to the rugged Pindos and Tzoumerka mountain ranges or down to the rivers Aoos, Viodomatis, Arachthos and Kalamas for canoe-kayak, rafting and horse-back riding, then relax in a mountain resort for a bit of glitz. For your experience of Vicos gorge, one of the largest, deepest and most impressive canyons in the world (in the Vicos-Aoos National Park, one of UNESCO's global geoparks), you'll have to write a book!

Pamvotida Lake is ideal for rowing, skiing and model boat racing. Are you looking for something more easygoing? No problem! You can walk, run, and even ride your bike around the lake on a custom made 8km long sidewalk. Every year Ioannina Lake Run takes place at the lake, one of the most famous and beautiful running events in the country. For those that enjoy mother nature, the lake is an ideal place to go birdwatching as its a shelter for dozens of endemic and migratory bird species.

The mountains around Ioannina offer an even bigger selection of activities. Vasilitza and Metsovo are two skiing resorts that will satisfy even the most experienced skiers. Other outdoor activities include things such as mountain hiking in and around the gorgeous winding trails, horseback riding, paragliding, rafting, canoeing and kayaking. You can even go on a wild mushroom hunt! And of course the nearby sea offers countless opportunities for even more sport activities. In the coasts of Thesprotia, you will find organized beaches where you can enjoy surfboarding, scuba diving, sailing, skiing and everything else the beautiful blue waters of the Ionian have to offer!



One town, countless experiences

Six amazing museums, a unique primordial cave, art galleries, twelve churches, one synagogue, sixteen monasteries, twelve well preserved Muslim monuments, and an array of townhouses and public buildings of architectural interest. Where do you want to go first?

Multicultural. Traditional. Ioannina.

The vast multicultural traditions of the region are reflected in the lake's waters. You can find them in everything you encounter, from the architecture to the churches and mosques, in the city's commercial streets, even in the delicious cuisine. Ioannina has been a multicultural city for centuries. The city's identity has been shaped by the Christian, the Islamic and the Jewish communities coexisting and leaving their mark in the city's historical center. Stoa Louli is the place where all three communities worked together and thrived.

The magnificent Castle of Ioannina was built in 528 A.D. by Emperor Iustinianos and was the epicenter of the city's cultural life. A walk within its walls will transport any visitor to the days of Old, when legends were alive and traditions upheld. It is a place where you can feel the spirit of the city, from its darkest dungeons and stunning mosques all the way to the impressive Acropolis.

Pamvotida, the lake of Ioannina, is a place of unmatched natural beauty, where even a simple walk or bike ride is sure to enchant your soul. Even more impressive is the Island located in the middle of the lake, one of the few inhabited lake islands in Europe. Just four kilometers outside the city of Ioannina is the 1,5 million-year-old Cave of Perama, one of Europe's most exquisite caves. The beauty of its chambers is breathtaking and the visitors have the unique opportunity to witness the grandeur of nature in one of its most impressive forms.

The Pavlos Vrellis Museum of Wax Effigies based in Ioannina is one of the most original and interesting museums of the country. The striking wax exhibits take the visitor on a journey throughout the history of Epirus and Greece.

The city's museums including the Archaeological and Folklife, as well as the Art Gallery, offer visitors the opportunity to admire the work of both ancient and modern Greek artists and allow them to get acquainted with the country's history, art and civilization throughout the centuries.

Let's time travel!

From the Stone Age, the ancient Greek civilizations, the Roman magistrates and the Byzantine despots through to the Ottoman pashas and the modern Greek democracy, the history trail leads to the unmissable attractions of today's multicultural Ioannina. Let's time travel!





Ioannina is the capital city and the largest in the Epirus Prefecture (North-West part of Greece). The City is built on the bank of Pamvotis Lake (500 m. altitude). The Municipality of Ioannina, has a population of about 130.000 inhabitants, an airport, a University, two major university hospitals, a sufficient hospitality capacity (more than 250 hotels in the Ioannina County region// total: 9,000 beds, 2015 data) as well as a qualitative business-tourism infrastructure.

Epirus occupies the northwestern part of Greece. It borders with Albania and to the west, through the port of Igoumenitsa adjacent to Italy. The Region has an area of 9203 square km. occupying 6.97% of the total area of Greece. Includes four Prefectures: Ioannina, Arta, Thesprotia and Preveza. Ioannina is the headquarters of the region and capital city of the prefecture.

The geomorphology of the continent is characterized by severe mountainous terrain and the abundance of surface water. The only lowland areas are in the prefectures of Arta and Preveza, and the valleys of the rivers Acheron and Kalamas. The mountains are typical of the area, covering 74.2% of the total area and account for 33.4% of the population of the region. The mountain range of Pindos, follow the Albanian Alps, is a natural geographical boundary of the Western Region of Macedonia (northern part) and Thessaly (south).

The total area of the region is 9.203 square kilometers, of which 14% is agriculture land, 52% is covered by grassland, 26% is forest and 3% represents the surface waters, while built up areas and other uses account for the remainder of the land. The 74% of the region is mountainous areas. According to the census of 2013 Epirus has a population of 573.820 inhabitants.



TRAVEL INFORMATION

CLIMATE CONDITIONS

Ioannina experiences a Mediterranean climate. The warmest months are July and August, when average high temperature reaches 30.9°C (87.4°F). The coldest month is January, when the average low temperature drops to 0.2°C (32.4°F).

REACHING IOANNINA

By Plane: There are two flights from Athens to Ioannina Airport per day offered by Aegean-Olympic Airways.

By Coach: Ioannina is connected by coaches to Athens and Thessaloniki several times a day. All the villages and the coasts of Epirus are connected by coaches to Ioannina. Tel: (0030) 26510 25014 / 26510 27442, 26510 26211 / 26510 26286
Local Buses: Tel: 26510 22239

By Car: The town is 410 km. from Athens. Egnatia Motorway, a modern motorway of international standards connects Ioannina to Thessaloniki (270 km).

By sea: Igoumenitsa's Port is currently the third port in size in Greece but considered as no1 as far as the country commercial access. It is situated in the northwest part of mainland Epirus, opposite Corfu Island (18 nautical miles) and very close to the borders between Greece and Albania. It lies 92 km. (half an hour) away from Ioannina. The geographical position of the port turned the city of Igoumenitsa into the most important commercial harbour of Northwest Greece. Tel: (0030) 26650 99300.

FREE WIFI

In the town of Ioannina you have a wireless internet access for your mobile phone or laptop. The network covers nowadays the center of the city and it is constantly expanding.

PARKING

The best way to sightsee Ioannina is on foot. So, you must leave your car in one of many parking spots and then walk yourself around.

- In the center of the town, near the clock tower, the outdoor parking of Ioannina Municipality.
- An underground parking near the central square.
- A parking at the start of the pedestrian Mich. Angel Street, near the building of the Region of Epirus.
- A large outdoor free parking next to the lake, near the castle and the old market.



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