

A scenic sunset over the sea. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow across the sky and reflecting on the water. A cliffside with buildings is visible on the left. The sky is filled with dramatic, colorful clouds. The overall mood is peaceful and beautiful.

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# CORFU

itinerary



## Corfu island

Magnificent, verdant Corfu, or Kerkyra (ker-kih-rah) in Greek, was Homer's 'beautiful and rich land'. Mountains dominate the northern half where the coastlines can be steep and dramatic and where the island's interior is a rolling expanse of peaceful countryside. Stately cypresses, used for masts by the Venetians, rise from shimmering olive groves (also a Venetian inspiration). South of Corfu Town the island narrows and flattens. Beaches with sometimes oppressively thick development punctuate the entire coastline. Development is most intensive north of Corfu Town and along the northernmost coast.

Corfu was a seat of European learning in the early days of modern Greece. While the rest of the nation struggled simply to get by, the Corfiots established cultural institutions such as libraries and centres of learning, and many major Greek figures like Ioannis Kapodistrias, the first head of independent Greece, hailed from Corfu. To this day, Corfiots remain proud of their intellectual and artistic roots. This legacy is visible from its fine museums and cultural life to its high-calibre, Italian-influenced cuisine.



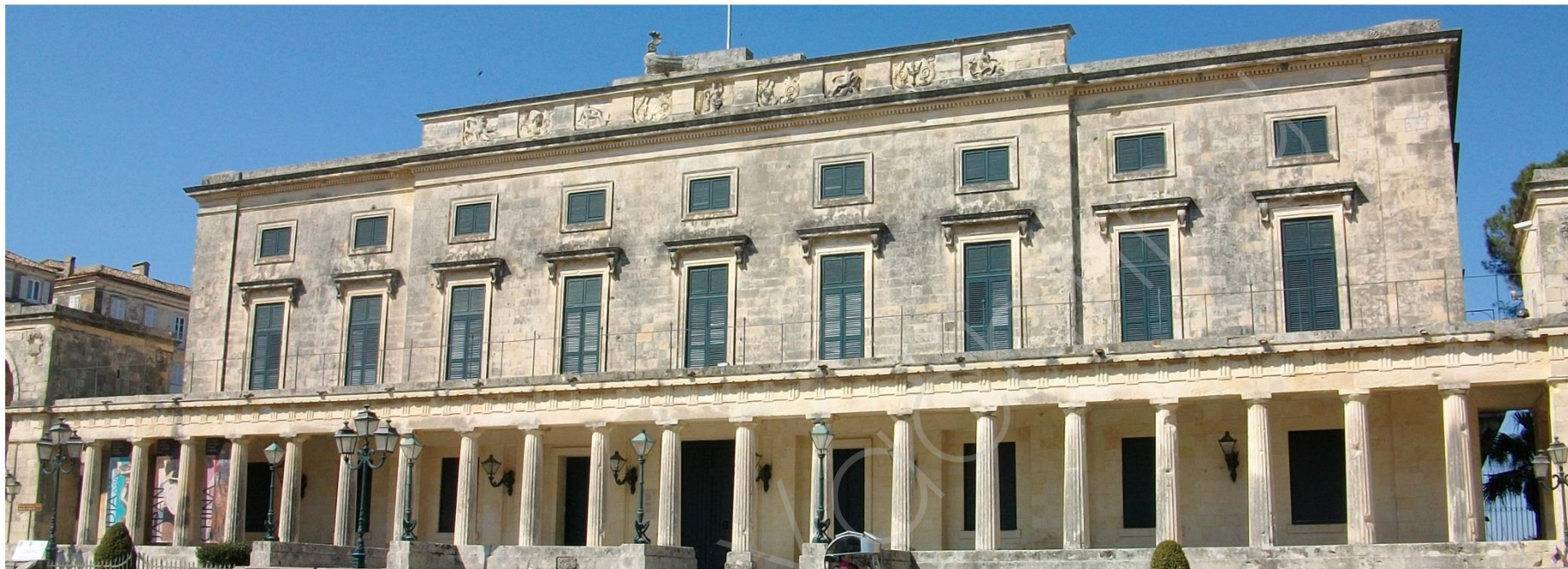
## Corfu Town

Charming, cosmopolitan Corfu Town (also known as Kerkyra) takes hold of you and never lets go. If you approach by sea, you will be met by the majesty of the famous Palais Frourio (Old Fortress). Take a wander after the day-trippers leave to discover enchanting pastel-hued Venetian-era mansions, top museums and artistic life, and a buoyant year-round cosmopolitan spirit. Don't miss some of the region's finest restaurants.



## Palaio frourio

Constructed by the Venetians in the 15th century on the remains of a Byzantine castle and further altered by the British, this spectacular landmark offers respite from the crowds and superb views of the region. Climb to the summit of the inner outcrop which is crowned by a lighthouse for a 360-degree panorama. The gatehouse contains a Byzantine museum .



## Palace of St Michael & St George

Originally the residence of a succession of British high commissioners, this palace now houses the world-class Museum of Asian Art, founded in 1929. Expertly curated with extensive, informative English-language placards, the collection's approximately 10,000 artefacts collected from all over Asia include priceless prehistoric bronzes, ceramics, jade figurines, coins and works of art in onyx, ivory and enamel. Additionally, the palace's throne room and rotunda are impressively adorned in period furnishings and art.

Behind the eastern side of the palace, the Municipal Art Gallery houses a fine collection featuring the work of leading Corfiot painters, a collection of splendid icons, rotating exhibitions, and a lovely seatfront cafe.



## Church of Agios Spyridon

It is believed by the faithful that the plague, on its way out of the island, scratched one of the fortification stones of the old citadel (Palacio Frourio) to indicate its fury for being expelled. This scratch is still shown to visitors. St. Spyridon is also believed to have saved the island at the second great siege of Corfu which took place in 1716. At that time the Turkish army and naval force led by the great Sultan Achmet III appeared in Butrinto opposite Corfu. On July 8 the Turkish fleet carrying 33,000 men sailed to Corfu from Butrinto and established a beachhead in Ipsos. The same day the Venetian fleet encountered the Turkish fleet off the channel of Corfu and defeated it in the ensuing naval battle. On July 19 the Turkish army reached the hills of the town and laid siege to the city. After repeated failed attempts and heavy fighting, the Turks were forced to raise the siege which had lasted 22 days.

There were also rumours spreading among the Turks that some of their soldiers saw St. Spyridon as a monk threatening them with a lit torch and that helped increase their panic. This victory over the Turks, therefore, was attributed not only to the leadership of Count Schulenburg who commanded the stubborn defence of the island against the Turks but also to the miraculous intervention of St. Spyridon. After the victorious outcome of the battle, Venice honoured Schulenburg and the Corfiotes for successfully defending the island. The great composer Vivaldi was commissioned to write an opera, *Juditha triumphans*, in celebration of the victory.



## Mon Repos

On the southern outskirts of town on the Kanoni Peninsula, an extensive wooded parkland estate surrounds an elegant neoclassical villa housing the Museum of Palaeopolis, with entertaining archaeological displays and exhibits on the history of Corfu Town. Paths lead through lush grounds to the ruins of two Doric temples; the first is truly a ruin, but the southerly Temple of Artemis is serenely impressive.



## Pontikonisi

Pontikonisi Island is situated just south of Cortu town near the resort of Perama and Kanoni, it is a small island which houses the Byzantine church of Pantokrator, which was built in the 11th or 12th century. The Byzantine chapel that is on the top of the island encloses the memorial tablets of Elizabeth Empress of Austria and Rodolfo archduke. Pontikonisi Island means 'Mouse Island' in Greek and it is from this that it gets its more famous name and viewed from afar the island gives the impression of a mouse. According to Greek legend the boat of Odysseus was turned into this island by Poseidon.

You can reach the island by a small boat in the summer months, which leaves from the small port opposite but you should be aware that you will not be allowed to walk around the island or the church. The only day of the year the church is open to visitors is on August 6th, which is a celebration day called 'The Transfiguration of Jesus' and pilgrims





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