

Ioannina Greece

one city...

many destinations



Promenading around the city



Rendezvous at the central square in front of the Regional Council building, which is one of the city's landmarks. Behind it, lies a vast commercial area, offering a choice of shops and stores. Try one of the many lovely cafés and watch out for little cultural treasures and architectural monuments hiding among shop-fronts and stores: the Folk Museum of the Society for Epirot Studies, the Post Office building, Zosimea Library, old Papazoglios Weaving School, old Kaplanios School and old house Pysinella. Before you leave the city centre, pay a visit to Ioannina's Archaeological Museum based at Litharitsia Park, whose building is a creation of famous architect Aris Konstantinidis. Embark on a journey to ancient Epirot cities in the museum and then wander through Litharitsia Park, which was formerly an Ali Pasha's rampart and offers splendid views of the historic centre and the Lake. Continue your journey to the city's Ottoman history with a visit to the nearby mosque and to Veli Pasha's Madrasahs, but also to the mosque of Kaloutsiani, and you might see a stork, relaxing on its minaret. Take a stroll back into the city centre and head to the Municipal Library. Small as it may be, the library adds significantly to the city's cultural life and it is worth the walk.



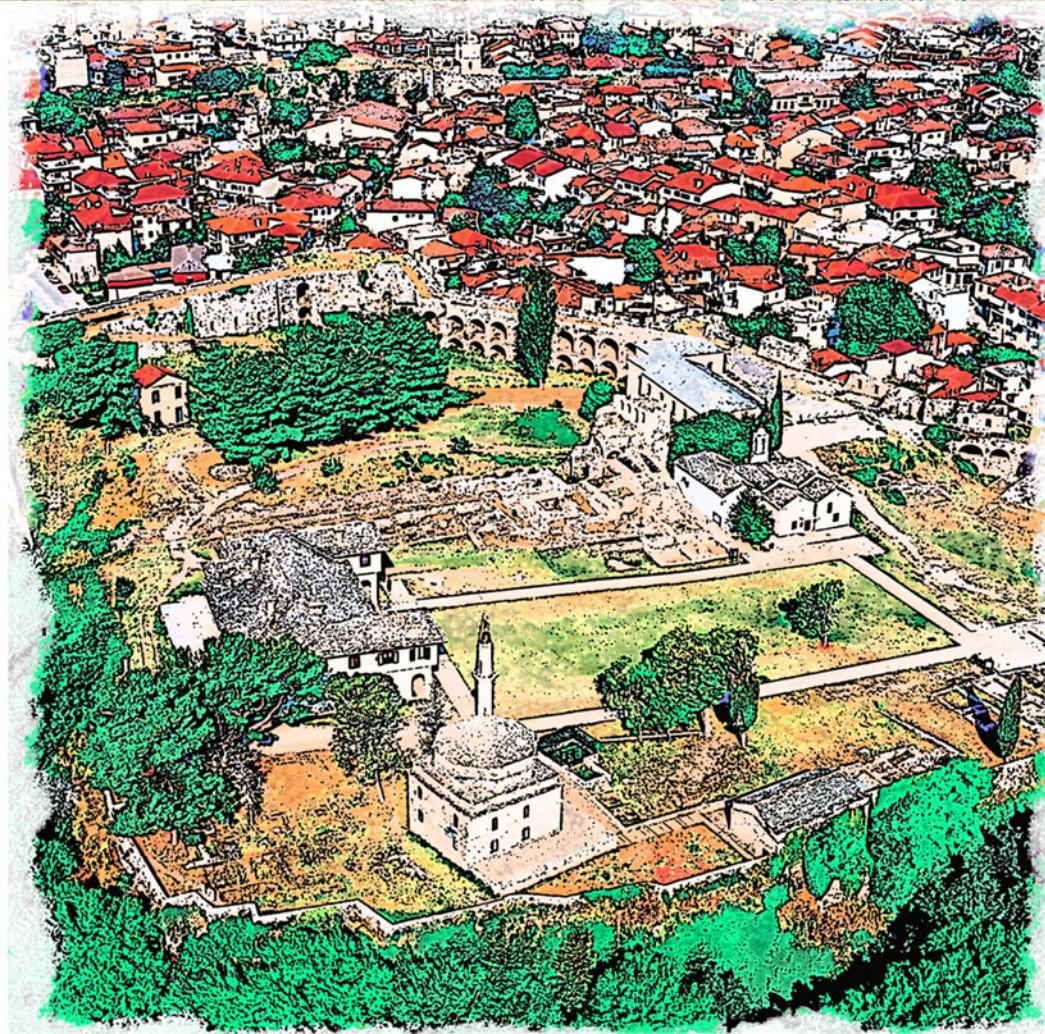


Meandering through the historic centre

If you feel like wandering around and actually losing your way, try the historic centre, between the city's front and the lake. Use the Venetian Clock of the Square (1905) opposite to the City Hall, as your starting point. Go down the central street, where you will find goldsmiths, souvenir and folk art shops, then let your instinct lead you: every narrow passage or alleyway on the right and left of the central street hides another surprise.

Wander this labyrinth of protected historic buildings, old commercial arcades, old Greek pensions, folk houses and small pedestrian zones.

There are plenty of bars or cafés, where you can relax, drink traditional Tsipouro and savor local delicacies, before you continue your journey through Ioannina of past centuries.



Rambling through the castle's streets

Whichever of its many entrances you chose to step into the Castle, you are sure to avoid the hustle and bustle of the city. The Castle is a traditional settlement interspersed with Ottoman buildings, such as the Soufari Saray, and the Mosque of Aslan Pasha, where the Municipal Museum sits, as well as the Jewish Synagogue. A crossroad of cultures and religions. Look up and you will see the acropolis, called Itch Kale, a small cultural park with museums and many collections. Throughout the summer months, it is the beating heart of the city and plays host to many concerts and happenings.

A walk at the city's lake

Paralimnion (literally "the area by the lake") is only a few steps away from the historic centre. There are so many different places to visit here: Mavili Square, "12" district, Skala district, Katsari Park, the cultural multi-space based at the old municipal slaughter-houses, Akti Miaouli district and the cycle lane and pedestrian area by the lake. At certain points along this itinerary there are clusters of restaurants and cafés. Be sure to visit the Ioannina Centre for Traditional Craft Making (KEPAVI) near Akti Miaouli district, where you can find jewelry and all kinds of silver handicrafts. A walk or a bike ride by the lake is a must-do. For those who fish or bird watch, don't forget your kit!



A stroll on the Island

Small boats fastening at Molos (pier) will take you to the Island, a place which was never given another name. It is just called the "Island". There you can visit Ali Pasha's house and an array of ecclesiastical monuments: Philanthropinon Monastery (1291), Stratigopoulou Monastery (13th century), Panagia Eleousa Monastery (16th century). Island's locals are always on the spot to tell stories, traditions and legends. If you need a relaxing stroll, try a tour around the island on foot, which will boost your appetite and allow you to taste local delicacies, such as frog legs, eel, crayfish etc.



Heading out of Ioannina

Situated only 15 kilometers far from the city centre, the archaeological site Dodoni inspires awe. Over the last years an attempt is made to reconstruct the ancient theater, along with other monuments, in the hope of hearing the echo of great actors' voices once again. In close proximity to the city, in Mpizani, you can visit the Museum of Wax Effigies, the only one of the kind in Greece. Before you leave the city, don't forget to visit the Perama Cave for a geologic journey through the rocky underground. Perama is also ideal for a stopover to try traditional dishes and Tsipouro. Boat trips are available from Perama to the Island. Explore Kastritsa hill (home to a cave where marine fossils and stone tools are sometimes found) and visit John The Baptist Monastery (11th century). Finally don't miss Lyggiades for an unrivalled panoramic view of the city and the Lake.



▲ Monastery of John the Baptist (11th century).



▼ Perama Cave

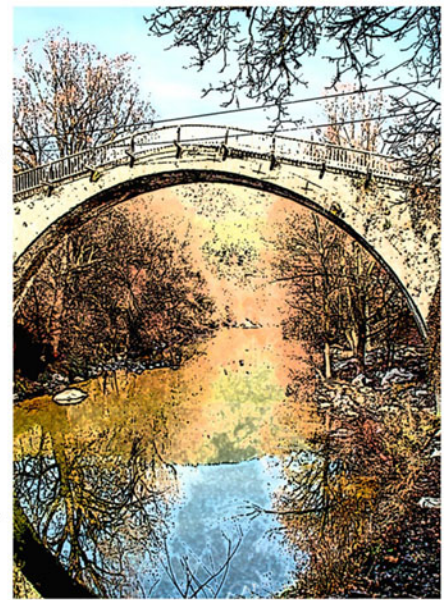
Museum of greek history & wax statues ▼

▲ Ancient theater of Dodona



A tour across the mountains

Escaping Ioannina is easy, as there are many options for taking trips in its surroundings. One of the most popular destinations is Zagori, an area boasting tens of traditional stone settlements, which fully maintain their cultural identity. The villages are separated by rivers, stone bridges, interesting shaped hills and the Vikos gorge. You can choose hiking through the countless paths of Zagori, mountain climbing on Mount Smolikas and its Dragon Lake ("Drakolimni"), Parapente flying or wild mushroom hunting. Don't miss river rafting in fabulous rivers not only in Zagori and the north of Konitsa, but also in Tzoumerka, whose wild beauty entices more and more visitors. The traditional Wallachian village of Metsovo is an interesting destination too, offering many attractions such as museums and a ski resort just at the doorstep of Pindos National Park, home to spectacular valley Valia Caldera and its beautiful lake.



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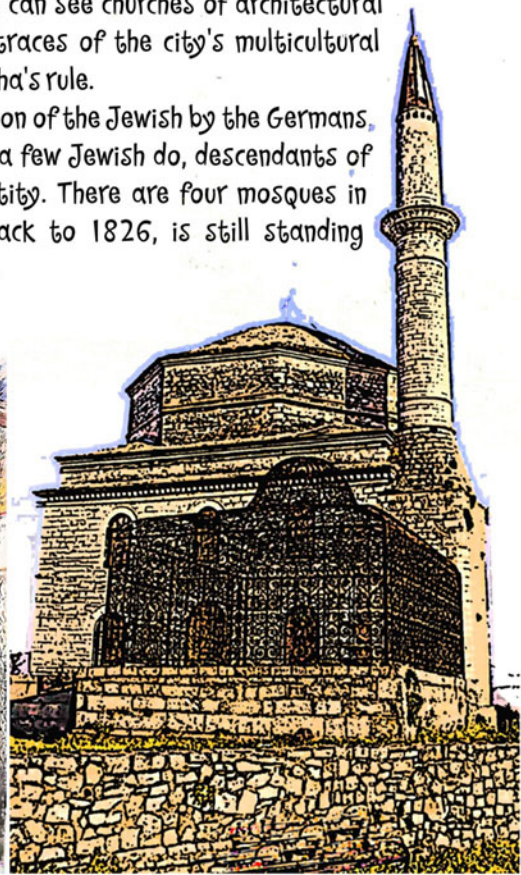
Plan to use Ioannina as your point of departure, taking day trips to the mountains and coasts. See numerous historical, religious and non-religious monuments, take part in sports activities, marvel at natural beauties, savor local tastes, and get new and exciting experiences. From the coasts of Thesprotia and Preveza to those of the Ionian Islands, this trip will be a truly unforgettable experience for children and adults alike.





A multicultural city

Ioannina's rich multicultural background is not a mere legend or historical fact. Visitors can see churches of architectural beauty, mosques and one of Greece's most important Jewish Synagogues, tangible traces of the city's multicultural character. The coexistence of Christians, Muslims and Jews was established during Ali Pasha's rule. But the Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey and the systematic extermination of the Jewish by the Germans, reshaped population composition. Today, it may be that no Muslims live here and only a few Jewish do, descendants of those who managed to escape concentration camps; but the city never lost its identity. There are four mosques in Ioannina, three of which are well-preserved, while the Jewish Synagogue, dating back to 1826, is still standing representing the largest and finest surviving example of a Greek Jewish religious building.





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Municipality
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