

ATHENS ISLAND HASH WEEKEND PRE-LUBE 21st May 2020

DAY TRIP TO PAXOS AND ANTI-PAXOS

Guided boat trip - 28 EURO pp

As we sail away from Corfu, the natural bay of Lakka comes into



view at the north side of Paxos, unspoiled by mass tourism, a traditional village suitable for those who seek tranquility. The ship enters Lakka and moors in the center of the colourful village. You can easily walk through the wonderful narrow streets for some shopping and enjoy your lunch at one of the traditional tavernas. Five minutes' walk from the west side of the village are two beautiful beaches surrounded by crystal clear waters, ideal for swimming and sunbathing. We continue sailing south along the west coast of Paxos island, enjoying the impressive rocky coastline and the unique white sandy beaches. Next, the boat enters the breath-taking sea caves, whose clear blue waters will leave you speechless. The blue caves marine area is a natural habitat of the Mediterranean monk seal (*monachus monachus*). Paxos, Antipaxos and the surrounding area is included in the European initiative NATURA 2000, a network of nature protection

areas. After exiting the caves, we arrive at the small but perfectly formed island of Antipaxos, whose sandy blue-water coves have been compared to those in the Caribbean. Here, you will have the opportunity to swim in the crystal waters of “Paradise beach” (Voutoumi). Our excursion returns once again to Paxos from the east side of the island and we can see the small islands of Skaltsonisi and Mongonisi, the picturesque port of Gaios village and the two small islands of Panagia and Agios Nikolaos. Throughout your trip, you are free to enjoy the sun and purchase refreshments from the bar. This is an unforgettable experience of the Ionian Sea, and we look forward to sharing it with you aboard one of our ships.



Further information read the brochure on line: <https://ionian-cruises.com/brochure/>

ATHENS HASH ISLAND WEEKEND 2020

POST LUBE TRIP TO ALBANIA

25th - 26th May

85 euro pp includes ferry guided bus trip and lunches. Hotel 20-30 euro extra tbc.



Day 1

From the Port of Corfu, we follow the Albanian coast to the city port of Saranda. After a short coffee break in Saranda, a 20 km guided coach tour reveals the south coast's virgin shores and scattered islands. Moving on from the mainland, we pass small picturesque villages and endless fertile plains that lead to a great lake.

The highlight of your day will be the excursion to Butrint – a UNESCO World Heritage site. Over the centuries, the ancient town had disappeared under layers of silt and vegetation, but archaeologists have since uncovered one of the best remains of a working town in the Mediterranean. At the edge of the lake is the ancient city of Vouthrota, whose well-maintained archaeological monuments and ancient theatre take visitors back 2,500 years to the 3rd century A.D. The Venetian Tower near to the entrance, the Temple of Asclepius, the ancient gymnasium, the Roman Baths, the Roman Baptistery with its priceless mosaic floor, the Lion gate, and the enormous Cyclopean walls will transport you to a time and place unrecognizable to modern man. At the top of the hill stands the Venetian Castle, whose panoramic view of the Ancient City, the lake and the vast plains below is truly breathtaking. Lunch is served upon our return to Saranda. The coffee break in the old castle of Licoursi, with its spectacular views over the city, is a must for any visitor. The afternoon allows for a walking tour of Saranda, as well as a chance to experience the plentiful cafeterias, bars, and seafood restaurants that line the promenade.

LIVE EVENING HASH IN SARANDA FROM HOTEL

Day 2

Our second day is dedicated to exploring the ancient city of Gjirokaastro. With a population of almost 30,000, the city extends along the slopes of Mali I Gjere, a mountain in the south of Albania. Gjirokaastro's name derives from both the princess Argiro and the castle, which is the symbol of the city. Built in the 4-5th century, the castle stands on a hill to the west side of the river Drino. Protected by seven towers, it was reconstructed by Ali Pasha Tepelena in 1811-12 and currently houses the Museum of Arms, which is included in our visit. Both the market in the main city and the shops inside the castle contain a range of souvenirs for you to purchase.

Situated between Tirana, the capital of Albania, and the city of Saranda, Gjirokaastro is a small city with a distinctive architectural style. Established in the 13th century, the city went into decline in the 14th century and was conquered by the Turks. Located about 120 km from the capital, it is also known as the Stone Town. Since 1968, the National Traditional Festival has been held in Gjirokaastro every five years, and many musicians and dancers from all over the country come to participate. Travelling by bus, our guides take us to the unique old fortress, the museum, the House of Hodsja and at a restaurant in the main square where we enjoy a tasty lunch. On the way back, we visit the magical Blue Eye – an underground spring more than 50 meters deep that creates a lake whose turquoise waters will fill you with feelings of energy and peace. In the afternoon we prepare to sail back to Corfu.



Further info at: <https://ionian-cruises.com/shore-excursion/two-days-trip-to-saranda-city-butrint-national-park-blue-eye-and-gjirokaastro/>