

# EXPLORING GAIOS

The island capital and main port, Gaios certainly bustles when the ferries, caiques and yachts arrive, but still retains traditional charm. The town is guarded by two tiny islands, Agios Nikolaos and Panagia, which are accessible to the public, and well worth a visit.

A sea taxi regularly runs out to the islands: Agios Nikolaos is only 50m across from the harbour front, home to the ruin of a Venetian fortress dating back to 1423. Panagia (Virgin Mary), is named after the white-walled church that sits on the island and is the annual setting for Paxos's tribute to the national festival on the 15th of August.



Gaios



Plenty of fishermen moor by the harbour in Gaios

A wide range of shops, tavernas and restaurants, often tucked away in narrow, traffic-free streets, means that Gaios is very much the centre of island activity. Try and visit early in the morning when parking is easy and the smell of fresh bread and coffee wafts across the seafront. This is also the time to catch the boats that travel regularly to the tiny island of Antipaxos to the south, north across to Corfu, or east to Igoumenitsa, Sivota, and the fascinating Epiros Coast of the mainland.



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## LOCAL AMENITIES

### SHOPS

You will find plenty of clothing, jewellery, souvenir shops and other boutiques in Gaios. During the summer season shops are open from 9.00am until late.

### BANK

There is only one bank on the island of Paxos - located in Gaios. The opening hours are 8.00am to 1.30pm, Monday to Friday. You will also find two ATMs in Gaios.

### MINI MARKET

Several mini markets are located in Gaios. During high season you will find them open from early in the morning until late at night.

### PHARMACY

There are two pharmacies in Paxos. One is located in Gaios main square and the other in Lakka village. Paxos also has a Medical Centre should you require anything out of pharmacy hours. Pharmacies are generally open every day, excluding Sundays - from 9.00am to 2.00pm and 7.00pm to 9.00pm approximately. For more information please contact your Representative.

### DOCTOR

Your nearest doctor is located at the Medical Centre in the village of Bogdanatika. Should you experience any difficulties or require more information please contact your Representative.

### DENTIST

Your nearest dentist is located off the main square in Gaios. Should you experience any difficulties, require more information or want to book an appointment please contact your Representative.

### BAKERY

Your nearest bakery is located in Gaios - you will find three in the area. Much like the mini markets, bakeries stay open from 8.00am until late.

### RESTAURANTS

Gaios has numerous tavernas, restaurants bars and coffee bars to suit all tastes and budgets.

### BEACHES

One of your nearest bays is the town beach - situated at the southern end of Gaios. There are numerous pebble beaches, coves and bays on all the coast roads leading from Gaios.

### POST OFFICE

There is only one post office in Paxos, situated behind the main square in Gaios. The opening hours are 8.00am to 1.30pm, Monday to Friday.

### PETROL STATION

There are two petrol stations in Paxos; one is located in Gaios and the other in Magazia - they stay open from 8.30am to 2.30pm and 6.30pm to 9.30pm Monday to Saturday. During high season the stations will stay open on Sundays too.

# EXPLORING PAXOS

The people who tend the olive groves have generations of experience, meaning that the Paxos olive trees are the most pampered in the world. They produce a connoisseur's oil, golden smooth and mellow. Not for these trees is the annual back and sides of a severe



pruning. They are allowed to grow more or less unrestrained. What's good for the olives is also good for the islanders and their visitors, for Paxos is as much an island of dappled shade, cool glades and peaceful woodland walks as of beaches, hidden coves and wild cliffs.

Visitors have been coming to the island since ancient times, most of them uninvited, until the development of tourism in the latter half of the 20th Century. Somehow the island seems to have avoided much of the bloodshed and strife of its larger neighbours. Anthony and Cleopatra allegedly enjoyed a final romantic meal together on the island before the fateful Battle of

Actium in 31 BC, candlelit of course, with water lapping against the sides of their quinquereme and the moon silvering the waves!

Since the end of World War II, Paxos' reputation as a peaceful holiday paradise has struck a chord with the British and once visited appears to inspire a lifelong devotion. There is one family who come to the island every year and are now well into the fourth generation!

The villages of the island are intriguing. Gaios, is considered the gateway to Paxos and its harbour is spectacularly disguised from the sea by the small island of Agios Nikolaos, inhabited only by the local priests. Once around this most holy of islands, the harbour of Gaios opens up magnificently to reveal the waterfront and the patchwork of alleyways and tavernas. Further up the coast one will find Loggos, a picturesque traditional Greek fishing village.

Sleepy by nature, Loggos is a tranquil retreat with four tavernas, a bakery and a mini market. Close by, after a short stroll through the olive trees, you will stumble across the excellent peaceful beaches of Levrechio, Marmari, Kipos and Glyfada - all with white pebbles and crystal clear aqua blue waters. Inland you will find the village of Magazia, a village with tavernas and a mini market set amongst the deepest of olive groves at the crossroads of all the inland lanes that wind round the island.

Paxos has avoided all forms of mass tourism, and whilst Gaios, the capital, and to a lesser extent the smaller villages of Lakka and Loggos, buzz with a cosmopolitan mix of yachtsmen and day visitors from Corfu. Very few people stray further afield. Even in the middle of



August, one can wander along any of the hundreds of paths and rarely meet a soul.

With no large hotel complexes, villas and apartments that are mostly set by themselves amongst the olives, the island can never become overcrowded - allowing the native islanders and their seasonal visitors to get to know each other.

This is by no means an island whose sole *raison d'être* is tourism. In fact it is still said that the cultivation of the olive is still the major source of income on Paxos.

To stay here is to enjoy the complete Ionian way of life!



Aerial view of Paxos

## A BRIEF HISTORY

Perhaps the reason that Paxos remains one of the most tranquil holiday islands in Greece, is due to its remarkably untroubled history. It might also have something to do with the fact that its larger and more strategic neighbour, Corfu, has always been a more important military and economic target for invaders.

Poseidon himself, in a rare moment of calm contemplation, decided he needed an island retreat far from gods

and men, where he could dwell in peace with his beloved Amfriti. He struck the southern peninsula of Corfu such a blow with his trident that not only did he break the weapon, but he also formed the island of Paxos. Needless to say that the remains of the trident were subsequently found by the early settlers and since then it has become the emblem of the island.

As time progressed from myth into recorded history, Paxos would have shared some of the trials and tribulations of Corfu, but to a much lesser degree.

The Romans seemed to have found it peaceful enough to spend time lounging beside its clear blue waters, but when the Venetians took control in 1386, they naturally built a couple of castles: St Nikolaos at Gaios - which still stands, though ruined, and Dialetos at Babka near Lakka, which has disappeared. They also realised that Paxos would be perfect for the cultivation of olives, and to this end encouraged the islanders to plant as many as possible throughout the island. This medieval version of a Common Agricultural Policy was so successful that there are now over a quarter of a million olive trees on the island, outnumbering the permanent population by a factor of one hundred! At one time there were over 150 olive presses working here.

In 1797 the French took over the island, but only for 2 years until a Turkish/Russian siege was successful and Paxos became

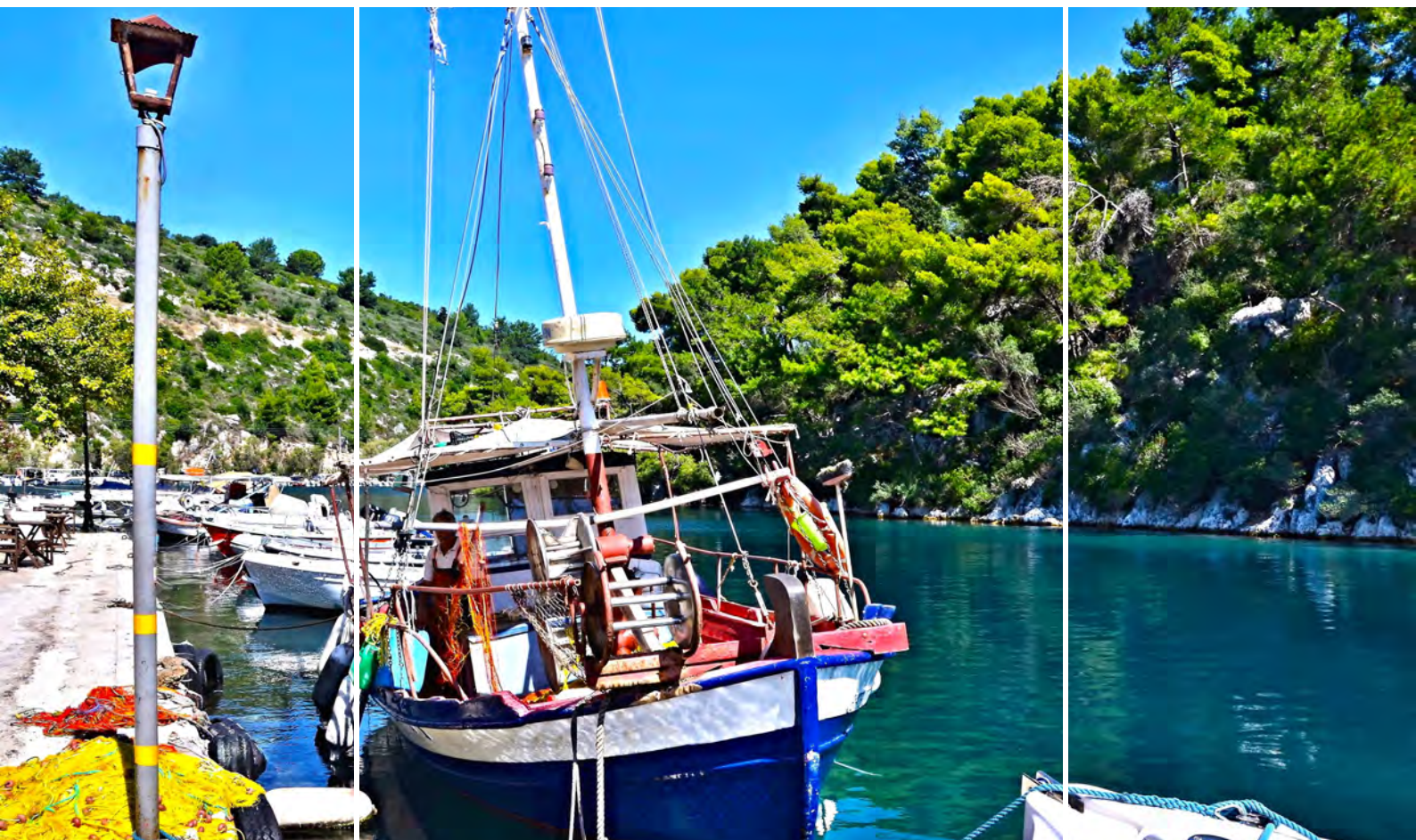


The old port of Paxos

a "Septinsular Republic" with its own constitution. Seven years later it was back under French control, finally falling to the British fleet under Captain Richard Church in 1814 after a prolonged siege, partly aided by the Paxiots themselves, who, fed up with losing their olive trade, killed the island's commander, Count Dimakis Makris. The French had briefly quelled the revolution and the ring leaders were given the ultimate punishment: taken off the island in chains and shot in Corfu Castle. Final victory

came when the Greek freedom fighter, Theodoros Kolokotronis stormed the fortress of St. Nikolaos.

The British ruled, in their inimitable and rather stern way, until 1864 when Paxos and the rest of the Archipelago were formally amalgamated with an independent Greece. From the middle years of the 20th Century onwards, the island has increasingly developed tourism, all the while maintaining its essential ambience of tranquillity and unspoilt scenery.





## LAKKA

Although a mecca for yachtsmen and windsurfers, Lakka is still very much a fishing village, as a meal at one of the local tavernas will attest. There are a few tavernas here and a small selection of shops, although there are also travel agencies that can change money for you, and also sell stamps and operate payphones.

## LOGGOS

Considered by some as the prettiest of the three main villages of the island, the houses here are all painted in traditional pastel shades, and cluster around the head of a small horseshoe bay. The main thoroughfare passes along the waterfront and here chairs and tables from the different eating establishments spill out across the tarmac - a particularly Greek solution for the provision of extra covers!

The surrounding hillsides, with their magnificent gnarled olive trees and rows of cypresses, are well worth an hour or two's gentle exploration.



The village of Loggos

Few would argue that a holiday on Paxos can be the perfect way to recharge the batteries or to escape from the demands of a busy world, but if a further boost is required then perhaps a visit to the

Zoodochos Pigi church in Loggos with its frescoes from another age and its fountain might be in order. The name means Fountain of Life and will undoubtedly put a spring in your step for the short journey back to your accommodation!

## DHENDHIATIKA

A small Venetian hamlet to the north of Levrechio Beach, Dhendhiatika can be reached up steps leading from the disused factory on the beach. The views are stunning from this point, however there is nowhere to buy refreshments, so make sure to take a bottle of water with you. You can also reach the village along the signposted road leading off the Lakka - Loggos road.



The tropical Lakka

# TOP BEACHES

## ANTIPAXOS

A regular boat service leaves from Gaios to the neighbouring island of Antipaxos where are two stunningly beautiful sandy beaches and two traditional tavernas. The small island of Antipaxos is located 3km south of Paxos and has to offer arguably some of the best swimming experiences in the country.



The mesmerising colours of Antipaxos

## GLYFADA & MONODENDRI

These two beautiful bays provide safe swimming in idyllic surroundings. The latter is often used by naturists. For those who do not like lying on sand or pebbles, there are gently sloping limestone slabs, perfect for sunbathing.



Egremni beach

The bays are accessible by a short stroll north from Loggos, or can be combined with an excellent coastal walk from Lakkos.



Voutoumi beach in Antipaxos

## MONGONISSI

Located 3km from Gaios is the tiny island of Mongonissi which is connected to Paxos by a narrow causeway. On the island there is a small sandy beach, with stunning green waters, beautiful verdant cliffs surrounding it and a taverna that perfectly complements the bay, offering some delicious local produce.



## KANONI & HARAMI

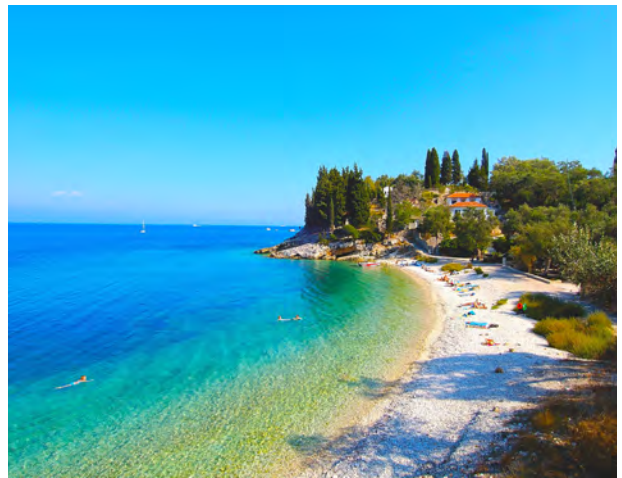
These two pebble beaches are on the western side of the bay from the village of Lakka. Kanoni is the smaller and quieter of the two, while Harami has a taverna and watersports are available to the public. The beaches can get quite busy here in peak season, but a short stroll out to the headland, Cape Lakka, passes a number of smaller, more secluded beaches in delightful surroundings and ideal for children.



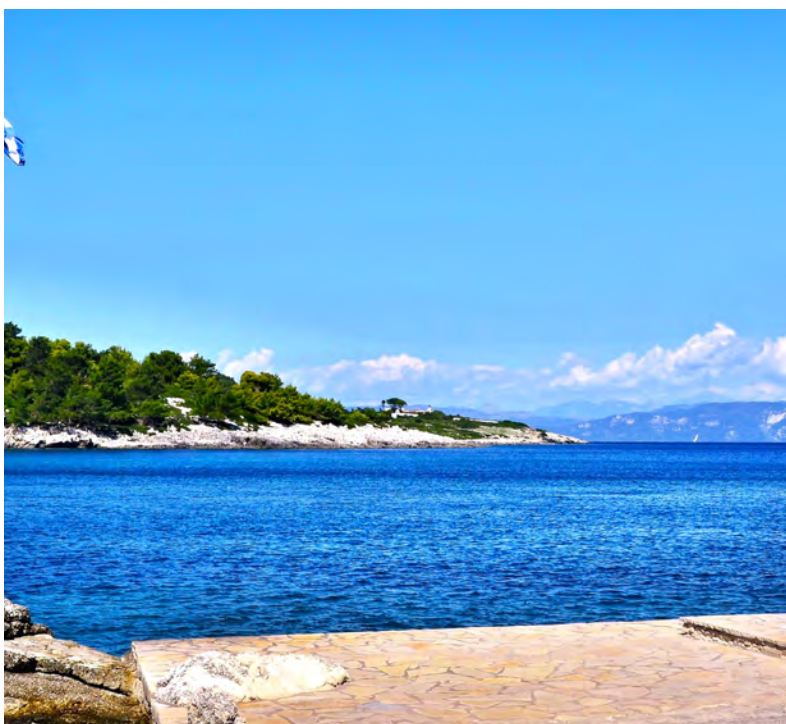
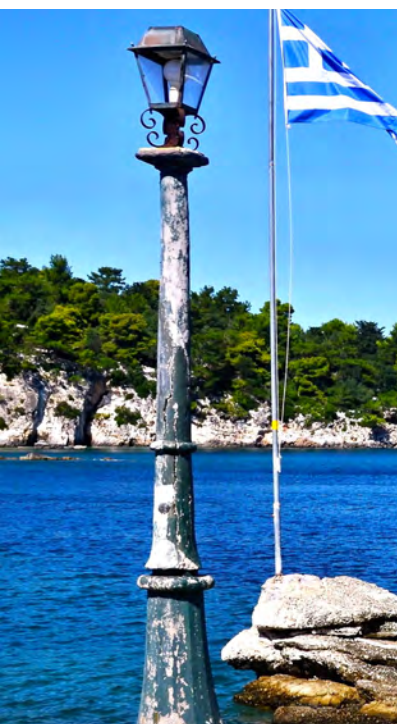
Harami beach

## LEVRECHIO & KIPOS

Levrechio beach, of dazzling white pebbles, is a 10 minute walk from the village of Loggos. It can get crowded in high season, but Kipos beach is only a short walk away. Kipos is one of the quietest beaches on the island, a perfect spot for swimming and diving as the bay shelves steep into the waters. This pebbly beach is again a few minutes away from Loggos.



Levrechio beach





# TOP PLACES TO VISIT

## ANTIPAXOS

Regular boat services leave from all three of the island's main villages to the tiny neighbouring island of Antipaxos. Famed for its stunning coves and excellent snorkeling, the island does get very popular with day trippers, especially in peak season, but it is well worth a visit - try heading south to avoid the crowds. There are three tavernas on the island but no shops or other facilities.



Antipaxos

The sea caves are said to be some of the finest in the Ionian, and legend has it that an Allied submarine was even harboured here during World War II. As well as independent travel to the island by sea taxi or caique, there are many round trip mini cruises from Gaios throughout the day.

## FOLK MUSEUM

Gaios' folk museum is situated in an old school building on the seafront about 200m south of the square. Exhibits include an 18<sup>th</sup> century

bedroom containing period furniture and costumes, in addition to various items on display from different periods in history - ranging from musical instruments to guns and firearms. The museum is open daily from 11.00am to 1.00pm and from 7.30pm to 10.30pm.

## MAGAZIA & ERIMITIS CLIFFS

Magazia village nestles beneath the island's highest point at 248m. It is a small piece of civilisation in the wild grandeur of the Erimitis Cliffs, which fall in a vertiginous sweep of white limestone to the sea far below. There are picnic tables and benches here, and a short stroll down leads to an excellent viewpoint for the caves of Achai Bay - only accessible by sea.



Erimitis cliffs

## LOCAL FOOD

The island of Lefkada promises to offer a rich gastronomic experience with dishes made of fresh ingredients and home made pastries. Throughout the island you will find a plethora of luxurious greek restaurants, traditional tavernas and plenty of restaurants offering quality international cuisine.

### FETA CHEESE

Made of sheep's and goat's milk and produced in blocks, feta is the most popular Greek cheese used in lots of Greek dishes, salads and even pastries. High quality feta should have the aroma of ewe's milk, yoghurt and butter, together with a smooth and thick texture.



A delicious block of feta

### SPINACH PIE

The spinach pie is a trademark delicacy in Greece. Homemade crust, filled with feta cheese and spinach.



The trademark Spinach Pie

### FLAOUNA

Mainly an Easter pastry, Flaouna is cheese filled dough with raising and sesame seeds.

The making of the Flaouna, normally prepared on a Good Friday and eaten on the Sunday, is usually a family 'team-effort' with the children helping their parents as sous-chefs.



Freshly baked Flaounas

### GALAKTOBOUREKO

For the majority of Greeks, Galaktoboureko is the tastiest sweet in the country. Made of home made pastry and custard filling with eggs, milk and sugar, Galaktoboureko resembles the French mille-feuille. Unlike the French delicacy though, in this instance, the custard is baked with the pastry.



A delicious Greek version of the French mille-feuille



## MANDOLES

Mandoles is a sweet snack famous in the Ionian, made of almonds and sugar. Inspired by the famous Italian nougat, you can buy mandoles either by the kilo or packed.



The greek nougat, known as mandoles or mandolato

## PASTELI

Pasteli is a sesame seed candy, made of local honey. You will find Pasteli in a flat bar, just like a chocolate bar. Pasteli is another perfect, sweet snack.



Fresh pasteli

## BOUGATSA

Bougatsa is the country's most popular breakfast pastry, made of homemade custard between layers of filo pastry. In every bakery on the island you will find a warm Bougatsa. In most bakeries you will be offered the savoury version of the pastry as well. You can find the Bougatsa where in place of custard, the pie will be filled with cheese or minced meat.



The sweet and creamy Bougatsa

## GREEK COFFEE

There is lovers and there is haters. People who have tried the Greek coffee, also known as Turkish - although you are better off ordering it as 'Greek' - have either fallen in love with its strong coffee smell and thick texture or have found it hard to even get a sip off the cup. Order this unfiltered coffee with a spoon of sugar, otherwise you will be joining the haters in no time. Complement your Greek coffee with some pastries from the local bakery.



Greek coffee is boiled in a pot