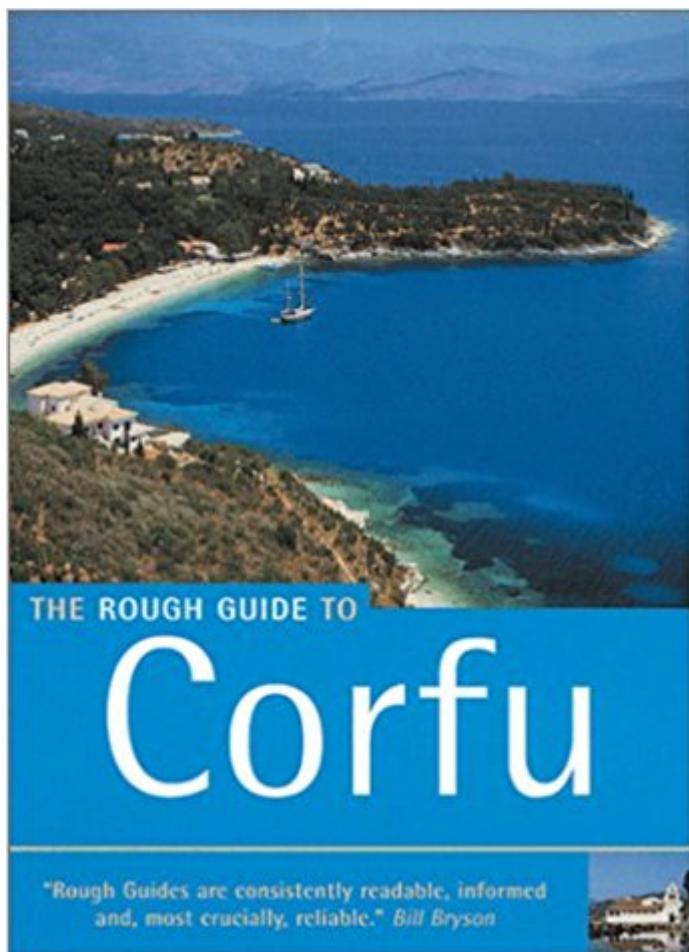


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The Rough Guide To Corfu 1 (Rough Guide Mini Guides)



Synopsis

The Rough Guide to Corfu is a pocket-sized guide to this beautiful and popular Ionian Island to help you get the most out of your holiday, whether on a pre-arranged package or travelling independently. The guide gives critical coverage of the towns and attractions, from the major resorts to boat trips to lesser-known beaches and villages. There are comprehensive and up-to-the-minute recommendations of the best places to stay, eat and drink. The Contexts section gives lively coverage of Corfu's cultural and historical heritage, including the best books and films that have covered the region.

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Customer Reviews

Nick Edwards started exploring Greece independently while studying Classics and Modern Greek at Oxford and went on to spend a decade living in Athens, teaching and travelling widely in Greece, where he first visited Corfu in 1983. He now lives in Pittsburgh, where he manages to keep track of his beloved Spurs on cable TV.

WHERE TO GO The only real urban centre, Corfu Town, home to nearly half of the island's 108,000 population, was renovated for the 1994 EU summit and is now one of the most elegant island capitals in Greece, with indubitable charm and a number of cultural attractions, ranging from impressive forts to excellent museums and galleries. Transport on the island's bus system is cheap, reliable and will get you to almost every village or resort. The services radiate out from Corfu

Town, and small change will get you to the furthermost points of the island inside an hour and a half. The island's finest scenery is in the northeast, along the coast between Barbati and Kassiopi, where neat pebbly coves are tucked into a verdant mountain backdrop, and in the northwest, with towering cliffs and wide sandy bays such as Agios Georgios Pangrati. The north of the island is dominated by the bulk of Mount Pandokrator, where foothills and summits offer great walks and even better views. Grouped in a triangle of dots off the northwest coast, Corfu's three inhabited satellite islands invite day-trips or, alternatively, make a great base for independent travellers with time on their hands. The centre and south is less hilly and more verdant: the lush farmland of the Ropa plain, which extends south from just below the resort of Paleokastritsa, is the island's fruit (and vegetable) basket. The central west coast conceals one of the island's most picturesque beaches in Myrtississa, as well as Corfu's only inland resort, atmospheric Paleokastritsa. Finally, the south has two distinct sides: narrow stony beaches and a few hidden beauty spots like Bokari face the mainland, while the southwest-facing coast is backed by verdant countryside and features some of the best sandy beaches on the island, especially the twelve-kilometre stretch south from the Koriissalon lagoon, a haven for waterfowl, to Agia Varvara. Resorts for nightlife include Kassiopi, Sidari, Agios and, notoriously, Kavos, still a favourite with teenage ravers. If you're on a tight schedule, spend a day in Corfu Town, move north to the vicinity of Kaliakmi, Kouloura and Agios Stefanos, and then pick a spot on the west coast.

WHEN TO GO If you can, it's best to avoid Corfu in late July and most of August, when holidaying Greeks and, to a lesser extent, Italians descend en masse to supplement the more steady flow of northern Europeans. Accommodation becomes scarce during this high season, and prices soar along with the temperatures. June and early September are just as good for those concerned about fine weather; in fact, recent years have seen a number of fairly unstable high summers, with rainy Augs followed by stunning Septembers and Octobers. In June, the sea has usually warmed up enough to make swimming a joy; in September it can be as warm as a bath. The shoulder seasons of May, September and October are the times for bargain flights and packages, and, though you may risk short spells of inclement weather, they are arguably the best times to visit. In May many spring flowers are still in bloom, and villages and villagers alike are fresh from the winter. In late September and early October you can be blessed with fine weather, warm seas and almost no other visitors. However, bargain package deals in these low-season periods should be carefully scrutinized: some remote resorts close down early, leaving those without the wherewithal to rent transport with precious little choice for food and entertainment. Early May and

late October mark the beginning and end of charter flights to the islands, although there's a mini winter season around Christmas and New Year. Outside these times you have to fly via Athens, but at least Corfu Town hotels are open all year and some persistent searching may unearth suitable accommodation elsewhere on the island. When the rafts of knick-knacks are packed away until next season, even the most developed resorts regain something of their prelapsarian charm, and Corfu Town, in particular, is at its best. The only bars or tavernas will be those the Greeks themselves use, which is usually the best recommendation at any time of the year. The winter months, November especially, see spectacular storms in the Ionian, yet it is possible to spend Christmas Day on the beach. Off-season travel is also the only way to catch the two biggest festivals of the year: pre-Lenten carnival, a Venetian tradition maintained with parades, parties and mischief; and Orthodox Easter, which is celebrated for a full week and can be an extremely moving experience. Prevailing northwesterly winds affect the whole island, commonly rising in the afternoon, occasionally developing into the refreshing maestro, which can blow for three days or more in summer. These winds make Corfu ideal for yachting holidays and watersports, but can render beaches at exposed resorts hellish. The island also has some micro-climates: most notably, storms that gang up on Mount Pandokrator, particularly in low and shoulder seasons, and douse the northeast but often miss the flatter south altogether. The climate figures given below are official averages for Corfu, though the record wet summer of 2002 certainly washed the zero rainfall figures down the drain.

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