

A brief history

Ioannina is the capital of the Prefecture of Ioannina in the region of Epirus. The area is of great historical significance for Greece. Despite suffering many hardships, the people of Epirus played an important role in preserving the intellectual traditions of the nation particularly throughout the period of Ottoman rule.

Many of the great intellectuals who originated from Epirus attempted to found Higher Education Institutions in the years before the Greek War of Independence or Revolution in 1821. The Society for Epirot Studies was founded in 1954 and members were vocal in their support for the creation of a Higher Institution in Ioannina.

In 1962 a group of Athens-based visionary intellectuals formed a committee with a single aim, to promote the cause.

On 8 May 1964 the School of Philosophy was first founded as a branch of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. In 1966 this Department was relocated to the current location of the campus near Dourouti Monastery. That year the Mathematics Department was also founded.

In 1970, the independent University of Ioannina was founded and started to grow rapidly in order to become today one of the most important Universities of Greece.

Today the University has 17 Departments, and has plans for several additional Departments and a Polytechnic school. It is ranked one of the best Universities in the country and its contribution to the production of new knowledge, especially in the field of medical research is considerable.

The University supports various student exchange programs in Europe and Asia. It welcomes international students and encourages local students who are keen to study abroad to apply to the programs.



The campus

The University Campus is one of the largest in Greece. The campus is roughly 6 km from the centre of Ioannina, overlooked by the restored 18th century old Monastery of Agios Georgios of Dourouti which is used as the University Cultural Centre.

The University has almost 14,598 undergraduates and 1,061 students studying full-time for Master's Degree and 2,357 Doctoral students. The numbers are rising annually.

Schools and Departments

The University of Ioannina includes:

- The School of Philosophy with three Departments: Philology, History and Archaeology and Philosophy, Education and Psychology.
- The School of Sciences with four Departments: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Computer Science.
- The School of Education with two Departments: Primary Education and Pre-School Education.
- School of Medicine.
- The School of Sciences and Technologies: the Department of Materials Science and Engineering and the Department of Biological Applications and Technologies.
- Department of Economics.
- Department of Plastic Arts and Art Sciences
- Department of Architecture
- Department of Cultural Heritage Management and New Technologies (located in Agrinio)
- Department of Environmental and Natural Resources Management
- Department of Business Administration of Food and Agricultural Products.

The website of the University (<http://www.uoi.gr/en>) has links to each School and Department.





Arriving in Ioannina



By air

Ioannina airport (King Pirros) is 4km from the town centre and 10km from the University. It only has domestic flights but there are daily connections to Athens with Olympic Air. For more information visit www.olympicair.com, (+30210 3550500 & 8018010101 for local info).

There is a taxi rank outside the arrivals door of the airport. But if you want a more economic method transport into the city there is a bus stop just outside the airport on the opposite site of the road. Take the bus number 2 with the sign "ELEOUSA – KATSIKA" ("ΕΛΕΟΥΣΑ - ΚΑΤΣΙΚΑ") and buy the ticket on the bus. Be warned: it can take a little time for the bus to come, especially on weekends. The bus will take you to the city centre and you must catch a second bus to the University. (See previous information.)

Buses to the airport leave from the city-bus central station near the old clock.

By road

The Greek Intercity Bus Company is called KTEL. The main bus station in Ioannina is located just outside the centre, near the lake, in Georgiou Papandreou Street. There is no bus going to the University from the bus station. (Bus No. 16: ΠΕΡΑΜΑ – ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ runs in the opposite direction, from the University to the bus station). We suggest you take a taxi directly from the bus station to the University.

The website: www.ktel.org doesn't give details of the bus timetables. Instead they offer a phone service (14 505 from Greek mobiles) but only in Greek.

The KTEL bus station in Ioannina can be called directly: +30 26510 26286 / 25014.

We have included some of the timetables here but always check the latest schedule. (We obviously can't be held responsible for any inaccuracies or changes!)

From Ioannina to Athens:

Times of Departure everyday:

7.15-9.00-11.00-13.00-15.15-17.00-20.30*-24.00

These times are the same throughout the week.

Times of travel is about 6 hours, distance 436 km.

*Not on Saturdays.

From Athens to Ioannina :

Times of Departure everyday:

6.00*-8.00-11.00-13.00-15.30-17.00-21.30**-22.30

These times are the same throughout the week.

Times of travel is about 6 hours, distance 436 km.

* Not on Sundays.

**Not on Saturdays.

The KTEL bus station in Athens can be called directly: +30 210 5129363

From Thessaloniki to Ioannina:

Times of Departure everyday:

8.00-11.30-14.00-15.30-18.30 *-20.30

Through Grevena 8.00-18.30

These times are the same throughout the week.

Times of travel is about 3 1/2 hours, distance 235 km.

*Not on Saturdays.

From Ioannina to Thessaloniki:

Times of Departure everyday:

7.00-11.30-14.15-16.00-18.30 *-20.30

Through Grevena 7.00-18.30

These times are the same throughout the week.

Times of travel is about 3 1/2 hours, distance 235 km.

*Not on Saturdays.

The KTEL bus station in Thessaloniki can be called directly: +30 2310 595442



By sea

It is possible to take a boat from the Italy to Igoumenitsa. From there, it is an easy 30-minutes drive to Ioannina.

The itineraries of KTEL from Igoumenitsa to Ioannina are as follow:

Monday to Friday:

From Igoumenitsa to Ioannina:

6.30*-8.15-9.15-11.30-14.00*14.30-17.00-18.15-20.15

From Ioannina to Igoumenitsa:

6.00*-9.00-10.00-12.30-13.40*-14.00-15.00-18.00-20.00

*old national road

Saturday to Sunday:

From Igoumenitsa to Ioannina:

7.00*-9.15-11.30-14.30-17.00-18.15-20.15

From Ioannina to Igoumenitsa:

7.00*-10.00-12.30-14.00-15.00-18.00-20.00

*old national road

Note: There is no railway in Ioannina.

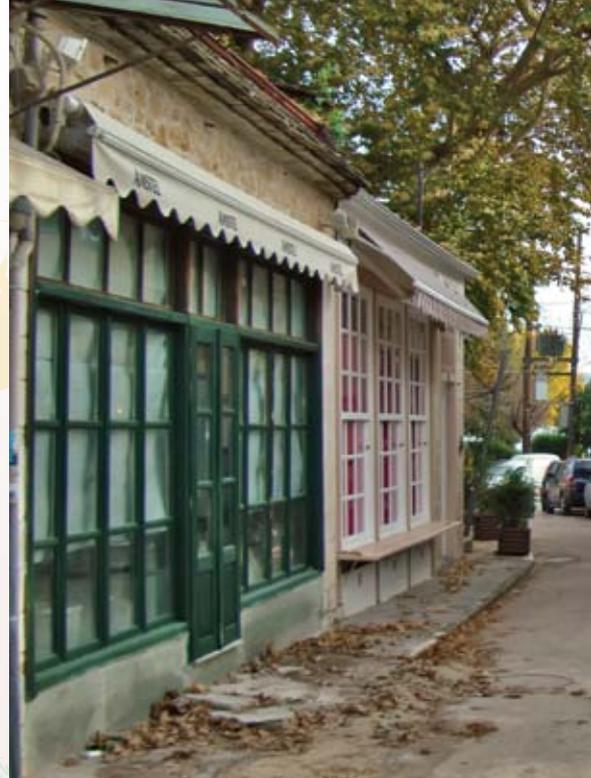


Arrival at the Campus

When you arrive at the Campus (Panepistimo Ioanninon or Panepistimioupoli), your first stop should be at the guard's office at the entrance (it is staffed 24 hours a day). The International & Public Relations Office will leave an envelope addressed to you containing the key to your room in the Residence Halls and other useful information.

Your taxi driver can then take you to the New Residences (Kenourgies Esties – map number 3). There are five buildings (A to E with A being nearest to the road). The Erasmus students are usually allocated rooms in A or E building. If you have any problem on arrival or at any time during your stay in the residence you can contact the

International & Public Relations Office by phone (dial 7264, 7519, 7107 from the phone in your room) or at the Metavatiko building between 08.00 am and 14.15 pm on a working day. During the night or the Weekend you can contact the central porter's lodge in the entry of the University by phone (dial 6533).



Brief history of Ioannina

Ioannina can trace its roots to the 6th century AD, as an important town on the border of the Byzantine Empire. During that period the rocky promontory of Ioannina was enclosed by walls and the southeastern hill, which later became known as Itch Kale, was inhabited. The city first appeared in written records in 879, described as an Episcopal see.

The area remained under Byzantine rule until 1082 when it was briefly occupied by the Normans (Bohemund I). In 1204, following the Fourth Crusade, Ioannina was incorporated in the Despotate of Epirus (Michael Angelus Comnenus Ducas). In 1210 the Metropolitan Church of the Taxiarches was built at Itch Kale.

In 1292 the Philanthropinon School was founded on the island in the centre of Lake Pamvotis and Ioannina became an educational centre of great importance. The city grew more powerful and in 1318 the Ecumenical

Patriarchate promoted it to a Metropolis. In 1367 it was granted self-governance.

The tower of Thomas Preljubovic which was built within the castle walls between 1367 and 1384 serves to illustrate the monumental form that the city had acquired. Albanian tribes raided the city in 1379, but were forced to retreat. However the gradual march of the Turks into the Balkans and the internal crisis of the Despotate of Epirus eventually led to the subordination of Ioannina to the sphere of influence of Carlo I Tocco (Italian ruler of Cephalonia and Lefkada) in 1411.

On October 9, 1430 the city was voluntarily handed over to the Ottomans. The governor, Sinan Pasha, granted the people of Ioannina privileges to settle and trade freely and although the Metropolitan Church of the Taxiarches was converted into a mosque (Fethiye Tzami) the construction



Ioannina functioned as the centre for 10 schools in the wider area of Epirus. These schools were supported by emigrants from Ioannina and Epirus many of whom had settled in Venice. (Trade between Epirus and the Adriatic ports rose steadily from the mid 17th century.)

The three major publishers of Greek books during the Turkish occupation: Glykis (1670 - 1854), Saros (1681 - 1707), and Theodosiou (1755 - 1824), were from Epirus and many teachers of the pre-revolutionary period taught at schools in Ioannina: Georgios Sougdouris, Vissarion Makris, Parthenios Katzioulis and Mihail Mitrou in the 17th century, Balanos Vasilopoulos, Konstantinos Vasilopoulos, Evgenios Voulgaris, and Methodios Anthrakitis in the 18th century, and Athanasios Psallidas and Ioannis Vilaras in the 19th century.

The 18th century was an auspicious time for the city and the progress that had been achieved was exploited by Ali Pasha when he took over as governor in 1788. His economic and military power gave the city an important position of strength in the Balkans and the riches of his court attracted many European travellers including Lord Byron. Many myths and legends grew up around Ali Pasha and the cruel punishments he inflicted on his enemies such as the drowning of Kyra Frosini and the hanging of Katsandonis (1809).

of a monastery on the edge of Mount Mitsikeli by the Muslim Durahan in 1434 illustrates the spirit of conciliation and peaceful cohabitation which existed between the Turks and the Greeks. This changed after Bishop Dionysios Philosophos led the peasants in an failed invasion of the city.

As punishment the Christians were expelled from the castle and deprived of their privileges. The Ottomans demolished 18 Christian churches and monasteries in the area and in 1618 the Aslan Mosque was built on the site of the former church of Agios Ioannis Prodromos (Saint John the Baptist).

Despite this blow the city quickly regained its financial and intellectual strength and the School of Epiphanius Igoumenos was founded in 1648, followed by the Gionma School (1672 – 1800), the Maroutsi School (1742 – 1749) and the Kaplaneios School (1805 – 1820).



Unfortunately a fire on August 25, 1820 destroyed much of the city (Ali Pasha's manor house was the only building to survive). Only the position and formation of the city walls (1815), and the foundations of the settlement within the walls remain visible today.

The people of Ioannina retained their strength and spirit of determination throughout this period. The first Zosimaia Teachers School was

founded in 1828, the Metropolitan Church of Agios Athanasios in 1833 and in 1867 a seminary opened on the island in Lake Pamvotis.

The hanging of Georgios the Neomartyr in 1838 failed to damage the harmonious existence between the Muslims and the Christians in the city. The Turks of Ioannina accepted Hellenic culture in the same way the local Jewish element (whose presence in the region dated back to the

early Byzantine period) had been accepted earlier. In 1870 fire swept through the city again, destroying many of the buildings including the seraglios of Itch Kale.

On 21st of February 1913 the Greek army entered the city and with the ending of the Ottoman era the city's intellectual life developed rapidly. In 1913 the Teacher Training College (later the Zosimaia Academy), and a Kindergarten Teacher



Training College were founded, followed by an Assistant Engineering School.

Even before the liberation from Ottoman rule newspapers had been printed in the area and during the interwar period numerous magazines were published (including Epirotika Chronicles which is still produced today). The post-war period witnessed a growth in the number of intellectual societies, the most important of

which was the Society for Epirot Studies which introduced the idea of a Folklore Museum and created a specialised Epirot library.

In the early 20th century the region was in turmoil twice; in 1917 during the Italian occupation and on the 25th of March 1944, when the Germans sent 1850 Jews to Auschwitz.

Today, Ioannina plays a dominant role in the

Adriatic-Egnatia Odos axis. The modern city with a population of more than 110,000 people is the metropolis of Epirus and functions as the economic and intellectual centre of northwestern Greece.

G. Ploumidis
Professor of Modern History





Ioannina, the city of legends...

Familiarity with the history of Ioannina gives you the key to understanding the character of the city and its inhabitants. There are numerous stories and legends.

...the tradition...

The city of Ioannina was known for the quality of its crafts, particularly the gold and silverware which had a distinct style.

The characteristic music of the area is called Ipirotika and the traditional regional dances are still popular.

The city is set in a picturesque landscape. Lake Pamvotis and the small island, Nisi, which played an important role in the history of the city, are surrounded by the often snow-topped mountains. The wild nature of the Pindos Mountains and the picturesque villages in the wider area of Epirus offer an assortment of unique views, cultural experiences and culinary treats.



...and the absolute student town!

It can be said that the pace of life in Ioannina is set to the rhythm of the students' life.

The numerous bars, cafes, restaurants, and clubs have a European style, blended with the Greek concept of entertainment. You can choose to enjoy live music or join in traditional Greek dances!

Make the most of your time here and enjoy exploring Ioannina by night.

Location and climate

Ioannina is the capital of Epirus region in north-west Greece, 434Km from Athens.

The city is at an altitude of 480m above sea level. The largest part of Ioannina is surrounded by mountains with very high peaks from which long rivers are fed. The basin of Ioannina is the greatest flat plain in Epirus and divides the prefecture into two parts, north and south. This zone combines a warm Mediterranean climate with a cold, wet mid-European climate. The area receives heavy rainfall during the winter months and frequent rainstorms during the summer. In previous years there were heavy snowfalls but the area now receives more sunshine and less snow.





✿ Places to visit & things to do inside & around Ioannina

The island

The island in the centre of Lake Pamvotida is inhabited but the majority of the land is untouched as it belongs to the church, Mitropolis. During the late Byzantine Period the island had 13 Monasteries. Only two are accessible to visitors. They are guarded and preserved by local families.

The most important, Moni Filanthropinon, is dedicated to Saint Nikolaos. It is a very important monument founded in the post-Byzantine years and renovated in 1291. Its priceless murals are a blend of different styles and of high technique. The illustrations include symbols that are difficult to decipher for the layman but which influenced the design of later works.

The Cave of Perama

In the village of Perama, 4km from Ioannina, is one of the most amazing caves in the world. It was discovered by accident in 1940 during the Second World War when the residents of the village were searching for a place to shelter from bombardments.

It is one of the most beautiful in the Balkans and has a rich variety of stalagmites and stalactites. It can be reached directly from the University on bus number 16 (Perama – Panepistimio).



The wooden glyptic iconostasis shows the high technique of the artist. It is similar in style to the iconostasis in the church of Ayia Paraskevi in Metsovo. A part of the Monastery functioned as a Secret School during the Ottoman occupation. If you visit, the current inhabitants will be happy to tell about the history of the building and a description of the murals.

The Monastery of Saint Panteleimon includes a small museum about Ali Pasha (the tyrant was allegedly murdered within the monastery). The guides will happily recount the many stories and local legends.

Dodoni

Just 22 km outside Ioannina you will find the Sanctuary of Dodoni, one of the country's most important monuments. The site existed in pre-historic years as a place of adoration of Mother Earth. Its later function as an oracle was recorded in Homer's Iliada and Odyssea. A branch of wood from the sacred oak tree at Dodoni gave the Argo its prophetic ability in Argonautica. The site is also mentioned by Irodotos.

The sanctuary was possibly named for Dodonas, the son of Zeus, or for the Goddess Dione, (a form of Dias the female name for Zeus).

It is known that Mother Earth was also worshiped at the site. Gaia in some cultures or Γη in Greek means Earth and she may have been equivalent to Dione who was the protector of euphoria and fertility. (The ancient Greek verb, διδωμι, meaning to give, is the likely origin of her name. According to a tale in

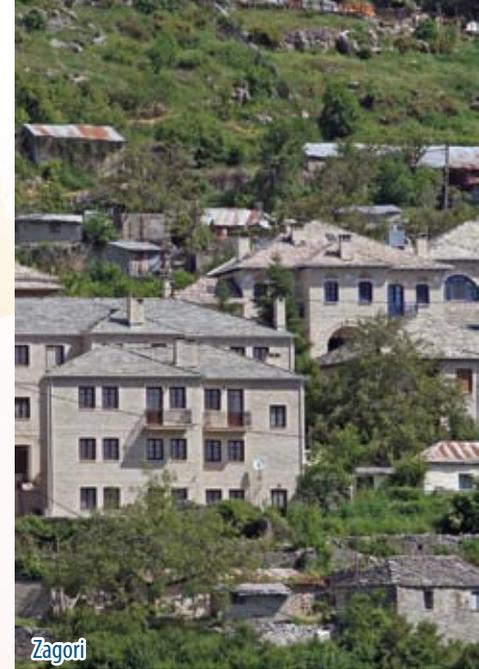
Homer's Iliada she is the mother of Aphrodite although other poets described her as the wife of Zeus. Zeus, (known to the Thesprotians as Naios Dias), and Dione were worshiped in Dodoni. They were believed to live in the sacred oak tree on the site called Figos. The priests were inspired to give oracles (prophesies) to the visitors divined from the sound of the leaves and the copper tripods which surrounded the base of the tree.

The theatre of Dodoni was built in the 3rd century BC during the rule of King Pirro. It is one of the largest theatres in Greece and can seat 18 000 spectators. The outline of the stadium which hosted Athletic Games in honour of Naios Dias can still be seen. The Games included drama and music competitions, chariot games and wrestling.

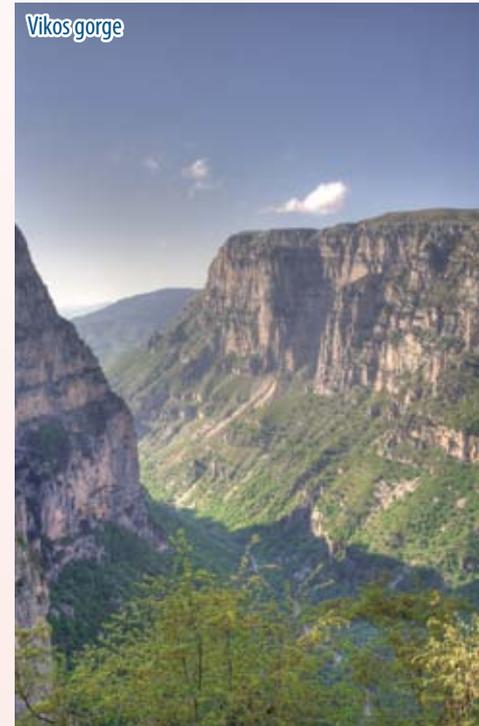
The sanctuary of Dodoni fell into disuse gradually with spread of Christianity from the 4th century AC.



Dodoni theatre



Zagori



Vikos gorge

Metsovo

The traditional mountain village of Metsovo, an hour from Ioannina, has managed to retain its unique character and the tiny shops still sell the traditional wood carvings, embroidery, and wine and cheese products for which the region was known.

Many great men and national benefactors originated from Metsovo including Averoff, Tositsas and Stournaris. They were the benefactors of the National Metsovian Polytechnic in Athens, one of the oldest and most prestigious higher education institutions of Greece.

The nearby Valia Calda National Park is a biotope of rare species of mammals and birds including the brown bear. There is also a small ski resort in the area.

Zagori

Zagori is a Slavic word meaning behind the mountains. The 46 villages of the region are tucked into the mountainous slopes of the Northern Pindos, a glorious natural environment. The area is known for its traditional style of architecture and the arched stone bridges.



Places in the wider region of Ioannina

Nikopolis

The city of Nikopolis, 8 km north of the city of Preveza, was built by the Roman Emperor, Octavianus Augustus to commemorate his victory against Antonio and Cleopatra at the battle of Aktio in 31 BC. (The Greek name, Nikopolis, means "the City of Victory".)

It was an important commercial, administrative and cultural centre until the 10th century when it was abandoned. During the 11th century earthquakes, raids and fires destroyed the city. Modern visitors can explore the remains of the buildings and the impressive walls which were built by Justinianus in 540 AC.

The Gates of Hade

The ancient Greeks believed that the gates to the underworld were located in an area North of Preveza. During the 5th and 4th century BC a temple in the village of Mesopotamos attracted visitors who came to communicate with the dead. The Church of John the Baptist was built in the ruins of the temple during the 17th century.

The surrounding area boasts some spectacular scenery. The Acherontas River, one of the five rivers of Hades can be explored by kayak and the local mountaineering clubs organise regular walks to explore the region.

Vikos gorge

Vikos Gorge, 40km north of Ioannina, is mentioned in the Guinness Book of Records as the deepest gorge in relation to its width. The gorge can be reached from the nearby villages: Papigo, Vikos, Monodentri and Koukouli. You can walk the gorge, following the Voidomatis River, with members of the local mountaineering club. The landscape, especially in the spring when the wild flowers bloom, is spectacular.

The Coast

Although the city of Ioannina is surrounded by mountains it is within easy reach of some of the most beautiful beaches in Greece.

Igoumenitsa is a major harbor but the nearby village of Sivota has a glorious sandy beach with blue-green waters.

In the area just north of Preveza, close to the ancient city of Nikopolis, there is a popular stretch of beach. (It is the spot for beach parties organized by the students.)

The lively coastal town of Parga is a magnet for visitors and there is a direct bus connection from Ioannina in the summer.

The island of Lefkada is world famous for its beautiful beaches. The island is connected to the mainland by a small bridge so is easy to reach by car. The Ionian Islands are also accessible by ferry from Igoumenitsa, Lefkada and Patras.



Local art and produce

The silversmith craft is a characteristic element of Ioannina hence the numerous shops selling silver products in the town. The craft prospered during the 18th and 19th centuries and modern artists are inspired by ancient Greek tradition and Byzantine art, while also expressing their Epirot aesthetics and sensitivities.

Ioannina has a small local industry specializing in poultry and dairy products. Cheeses with Protected Appellation of Origin which are produced locally by some of the largest Greek companies include feta cheese, kefalograviera, dry mizithra, Metsovone smoked cheese and galotyri.

Ioannina is also famous for its traditional desserts which you can sample in the local patisseries.

Another regional speciality, you may enjoy tasting is the local drink, tsipouro, (but be warned it is strong!).



Other place of interest:

Tzoumerka, Konitsa, Zitsa, Pogoni are also of interest. Each village has a unique traditional character and is surrounded by impressive landscape. They are reached by road but if you don't fancy navigating the twisting, narrow mountainous roads yourself you can join an organised ecotour.

For more information visit:

http://ioannina.uoi.gr/index_en.html (The city guide of the University of Ioannina)

<http://www.eot.gr>

<http://www.epcon.gr>

<http://www.nomioan.gr/turism.asp> (Guides from the Prefecture of Ioannina)

<http://www.hit360.com/nomioan/en/default.htm>

<http://www.culture.gr> (Hellenic Ministry of Culture)