

Partner Profile

Municipality of Zakynthos, GR



Zakynthos or **Zante** is a Greek island in the Ionian Sea. It is the third largest of the Ionian Islands. Zakynthos is a separate regional unit of the Ionian Islands region, and its only municipality. It covers an area of 410 km² (158 sq mi) and its coastline is roughly 123 km (76 mi) in length. Its population is roughly 40.000 people (census 2011).

Zakynthos is, according to **Trip Advisor** the 4th most famous island tourist destination, with an international airport served by many charter flights from northern Europe. In 2014, 600.000 tourists choose Zakynthos as their main tourist destination from all over the world. The island's nickname is *To fioro tou Levante* (Italian: *Il fiore di Levante*, English: *The flower of the East*), given by the Venetians.

The capital, which has the same name as the prefecture, is the town of Zakynthos. It lies on the eastern part of the northern coast.

*Bay of Laganas is the site of the first National Marine Park and the prime nesting area for loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*) in the Mediterranean*

*The most famous landmark of the island is the **Navagio beach** on of them most famous beaches worldwide.*

Municipality of Zakynthos

Zakynthos is a separate regional unit of the Ionian Islands region, and the only municipality of the regional unit. The headquarters of administration is Zakynthos (city), the main urban area of the island.

Pillars of administration

Municipality has a special role and wide remit that goes beyond that of an ordinary local authority with three main aims:

- to support and promote Zakynthos as one of Europe's and world's leading international tourist attractions.
- to work in partnership with local communities to increase skills, employment and opportunities for all Zakynthians
- to enhance the capital and island as a hub of culture, history and green spaces for "Zakynthians" – residents, workers, and visitors

While the island has a long history, and many of its traditions and ceremonies continue to this day, Municipality of Zante has a modern outlook that matches that of any European city and prefecture.

Working in partnership with local communities

Zakynthos cannot thrive in isolation. The Municipality works with public, private and voluntary sectors to improve long-term economic, social and environmental well-being across the island.

This is largely focused on education, employability, skills and job brokerage, in particular for young people. It also supports entrepreneurship, small and medium sized enterprises and social enterprises as well as fostering corporate responsibility in firms and encouraging volunteering and related activity.

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Culture

Zakynthos is one of the most notable areas of Greece in terms of Cultural heritage. Due to its position, a frontier between the east and west was conquered for 400 years by Venetians and not by the Ottoman Empire resulting in a unique cultural identity.

All along the island there are hundreds of venetian-Greek style churches and towers. Also due its proximity with the Italian peninsula, the Zakynthians who could afford such a journey went to Italy and got acquainted with the philosophical and artistic mentality of Renaissance and Enlightenment. Thus , the National Poet of Greece , Dionysios Solomos was a Zakynthian but also the National Poet of Italy , Ugo Foscolo was of Zakynthian descend .

This very special cultural identity resulted in Zakynthos being the cultural center of Greece when all of it except the Ionian Islands was under the Ottoman rule.

The presence of the British and France Empire also left its result in this special culture.

Furthermore, the Venetian rule affected also the ecclesiastical art, both in terms of architecture, frescos and music, unique in all of Hellenic World. The same effect occurred in the local folklore art in terms of theater (the omilies) , music (the kantades) and carnival (venetian wedding).

All the above , the national park , the famous tourist destinations and the unique culture resulted in Zakynthos being a key and constant participant in programs and actions of cultural heritage and environmental preservation.

Municipality of Zakynthos and the European Family

Policies and programs of the European Union constitute an important opportunity for local authorities, since they support and contribute to activities and investments with the aims of:

- fostering economic growth, environmental sustainability, innovation and social inclusion;
- encouraging innovation in the public service;
- promoting awareness of the need to respect human rights.

Municipality of Zakynthos joins in cross-border cooperation and local (National or Regional) projects for the sustainable social and economic development of its area, takes part in international networks and clusters, develops bilateral relations based on twinning protocols and agreements with towns and cities with which it has close cultural and historical links.
