

Step into the world of Ionia, a land where every path leads not only to the shores of the Aegean but to the foundations of history, wisdom, and art that have shaped human civilisation. The Ionian Route invites you to walk in the footsteps of ancient poets, philosophers, and artists across cities that have been gateways to knowledge, culture, and inspiration for over three millennia. Enriched by stories and traditions passed down through generations, this route connects travellers with the living heart of Ionia, blending the mystical beauty of its ancient cities with the serene charm of today's Turkish coastal towns.

# THE IONIAN ROUTE

## A TIMELESS JOURNEY ACROSS MILLENNIA

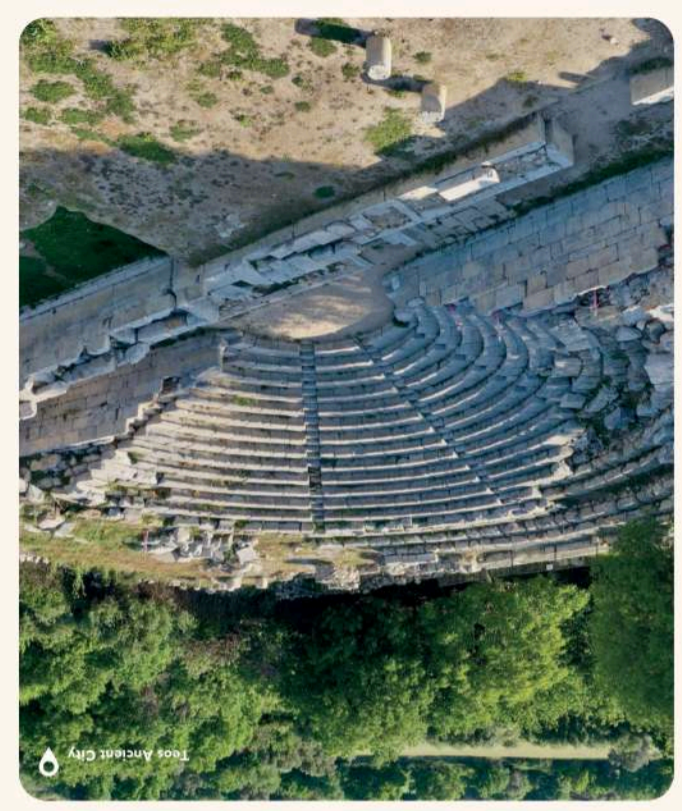


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The Ionian Route begins in Foca (ancient Phokoa), a town of İzmir, an ancient city famed for its sailors and ancient maritime prowess. Today, as a member of Cittaslow network, Foca embraces the peaceful rhythms of life, making it an ideal starting point. Here, the echoes of Phocaean sailors venturing out to found distant colonies like Marseille can still be felt in the harbours and cobbled streets. Against a backdrop of lush landscapes, Foca invites you to relax, savour traditional Aegean cuisine, and join the locals in celebrating their enduring connection to the sea.



Ionia, a remarkable union of powerful city-states, was the birthplace of some of history's most influential achievements in philosophy, literature, mathematics, art, and architecture. The Ionian League, also known as the Panionion, was founded in the Archaic period as a religious and political alliance, symbolizing the unity of the Ionian cities, and it continued to thrive into the Roman era. Today, the Ionian Route extends through the captivating districts of Foça, Çeşme, Urla, Seferihisar, Menderes, Selçuk, Söke, Didim, and Kuşadası—each destination offering a unique window into the past while celebrating the vibrant culture of modern-day Türkiye.

### WORTH A DETOUR

#### Enjoy your voyage over the bluest waters of Türkiye

While admiring the Aegean views, you can savor balmy evenings and Turkish cuisine at the ports where your boat will dock. The gentle movement of tides lulls you to sleep under the stars, and you wake up to an endless blue.

After your voyages through these lovely bays, you can visit the ancient cities under the stars. As part of the unique Night Museums project, you'll have the chance to explore the Apollo Temple at Didyma and the ancient city of Ephesus in the evening, immersing yourself in the ancient atmosphere beneath the cool night sky.

**Ride the Winds of Alaçatı**  
Alaçatı is a haven for adrenaline junkies, just 10 km from Çeşme, offering perfect waves and steady winds for thrilling windsurfing experiences. Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned pro, come and ride the waves in this world-class destination where adventure meets beauty!

**Discover the Vineyards of Urla and Seferihisar**  
The Aegean is home to some of the most stunning vineyards in Türkiye. Visitors to the Urla Vineyard Route can enjoy delicious and award-winning produce at chateau-style establishments, stay in boutique accommodation, visit gourmet restaurants, and explore the beautiful green countryside. Nearby Seferihisar, Türkiye's first Cittaslow city, is home to the historic Teos Vineyard Route, which connects the region's winemaking tradition with its ancient cultural heritage.

**Experience İzmir's Culinary Delights**  
Savor the perfect blend of tradition and innovation with MICHELIN Guide-recognized tastes in İzmir. Using fresh local ingredients, these culinary masterpieces showcase the best of regional flavors, where modern techniques meet age-old recipes for an unforgettable dining experience.

**Visit the House of the Virgin Mary at Ephesus**  
Step into the heart of history and spirituality by visiting the House of the Virgin Mary located near Ephesus and the charming town of Selçuk. A serene and meaningful journey awaits you at this revered pilgrimage site.



The journey continues through Teos and Lebedos, nestled within the tranquil region of Seferihisar, another Cittaslow town known for its dedication to preserving cultural heritage and nature. In Teos, a city renowned for its association with the cult of Dionysus and once a hub for the Dionysian Artists, the echoes of wine festivals and artistic gatherings continue to resonate, inviting travellers to immerse themselves in the local rhythm. The city also houses one of the best-preserved ancient temples dedicated to Dionysus. Lebedos, with its serene ruins and captivating scenery, offers a peaceful escape, embodying Seferihisar's commitment to sustainability and cultural preservation.

In the town of İldirı of Çeşme, ancient Erythral the earliest traces of settlement date back to 3000 BCE. The Temple of Athena and Herakleion are considered as structures that exhibit the best example of the Ephesus type in Anatolia, with their Ionic architectural order. You'll wander through artichoke fields and cobblestone streets of the town of İldirı before you climb up to the ancient theatre - Once an important harbour, this charming coastal town embodies the spirit of Ionian trade and craftsmanship, with its clear waters and breezy shores drawing visitors into its fold.



### A Living Bridge Between Past and Present

The Ionian Route isn't only a passage through ancient ruins but also a journey through the vibrant towns that continue to honour their rich heritage. Seferihisar and Foça's Cittaslow values showcase Türkiye's commitment to sustainability, community, and preserving the quality of life for future generations. This harmonious blend of past and present is what makes the Ionian Route truly special—connecting the ancient heritage of Ionia with the welcoming spirit of Turkish hospitality.

The Ionian Route isn't only a passage through ancient ruins but also a journey through the vibrant towns that continue to honour their rich heritage. Whether savouring a meal of local flavours, wandering through olive groves, or simply enjoying a sunset over the Aegean, the Ionian Route offers moments that linger, blending history with the beauty of nature.

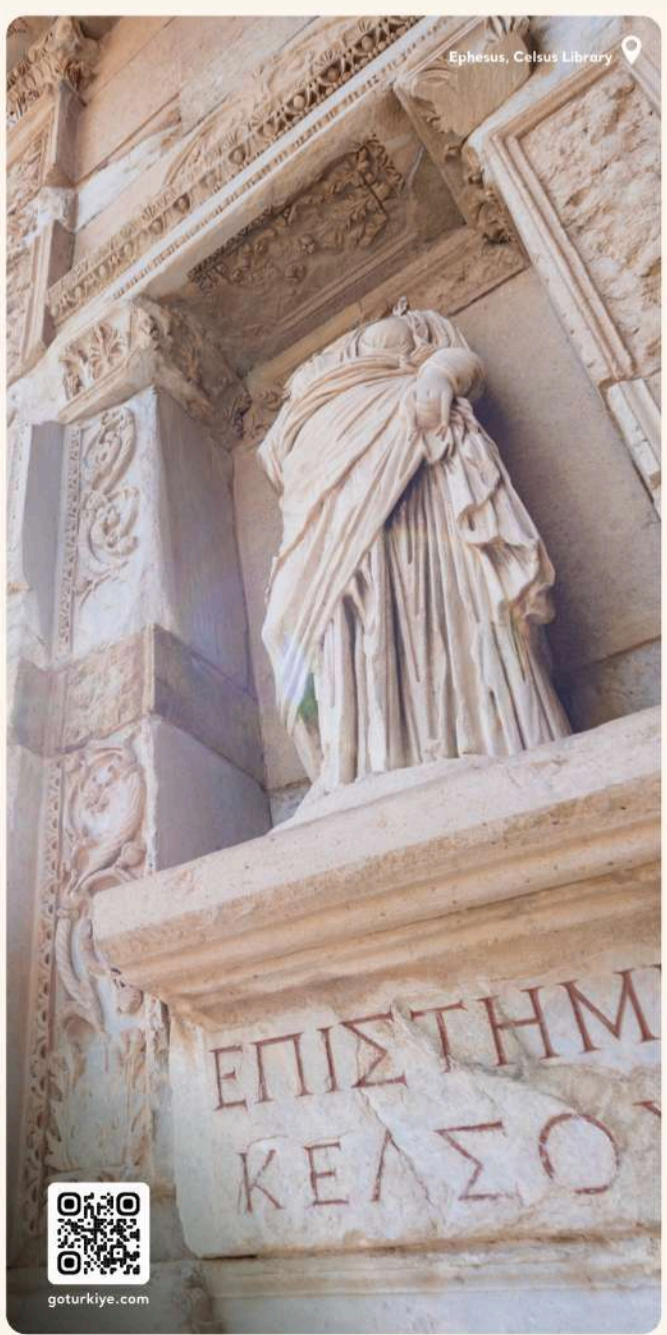
So, if you are ready to embark on a journey that transcends time, the Ionian Route awaits you. Here, on the shores of the Aegean, the echoes of Ionia's past harmonize with the vibrant pulse of today, inviting you to be part of a legacy that continues to inspire the world.



Not far from these sites stands the Temple of Apollo at Didyma, a monumental sanctuary dedicated to Apollo. Known for its impressive Ionic columns and precision, this temple remains one of the best-preserved examples of Ionic architecture. Once home to the Didyma Oracle, it was the second most significant oracle in the ancient world. Its imposing ruins continue to inspire awe, offering a glimpse into the sacred and architectural grandeur of the past.

Further south, in the towns of Söke and Balıç, in the ancient cities of Myus and Miletus, lies the heart of Ionian philosophy. Miletus, birthplace of great thinkers like Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes, was where early thoughts on nature, mathematics, and the cosmos were developed. Walking through Miletus' expansive ruins, you can almost hear the echoes of these foundational discussions.

most significant city to implement the Hippodamian Plan. Hippodamos of Miletus' plan, Priene is considered the first and most significant city to implement the Hippodamian Plan. From which we get the term "meander" to describe sinuous curves in rivers and patterns in art. As you explore the city's carefully arranged streets and buildings, you'll see the Ionian flow into the Aegean. In antiquity, it was known as Mialandros, theatre overlooks the scenic Büyük Menderes, the longest river to foothills of ancient Mykale (Samsun) Mountain, the remarkable Priene, known for its well-planned city layout on the southern course of history. streets—poets, musicians, and thinkers who helped shape the connection to the voices of those who once walked these gathered. As you wander through Ephesus, you'll feel a profound Library of Celsus, and the Great Theatre, where thousands once Today, the city's grandeur lives on in its iconic marble streets, the was a centre of learning, commerce, and religious devotion. Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, and the legendary city of Ephesus (modern Selçuk). Designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Ephesus is home to the Temple of No journey along the Ionian Anatolia is complete without visiting



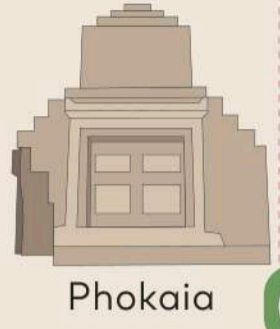
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A TIMELESS JOURNEY  
ACROSS MILLENNIA

1. İZMİR/PHOKAIA
2. İZMİR/ERYTHRAI
3. İZMİR/KLAZOMENAI
4. İZMİR/TEOS
5. İZMİR/KOLOPHON
6. İZMİR/LEBEDOS
7. İZMİR/CLAROS
8. İZMİR/EPHESUS
9. AYDIN/PRIENE
10. AYDIN/MYUS
11. AYDIN/MILETUS
12. AYDIN/DIDYMA
13. AYDIN/PANIONION



Foça  
Bicycle icon



01

Erythrai

02



Klazomenai

Urla

03

İZMİR

Menderes

Çeşme

04



Teos

Seferihisar

07

Claros

06



Lebedos

05

Kolophon

08

Ephesus

Selçuk

Kuşadası

13

Panionion

09

Priene

Söke

Myus

AYDIN

11

Miletus

12

Didyma

Didim

