

This article is about the island; see Lefkada (city) for the capital of the island of Lefkada. See Lefkada (peripheral unit) for the administrative unit.

Lefkada, or Leucas (Greek: Λευκάδα, [lefˈkaða]; ancient Greek and Katharevousa: Λευκός, Lefkás;) is a Greek island in the Ionian Sea on the west coast of Greece, connected to the mainland by a long causeway and floating bridge. The principal town of the island and seat of the municipality is Lefkada (city).[2] It is situated on the northern part of the island, approximately 20 minutes by automobile away from Aktion National Airport. The island is part of the peripheral unit of Lefkada.

### History

The myth about Sappho's suicide at Cape Lefkada is related to other myths linking the island to the ancient Greek goddess of love, Aphrodite, and to Odysseus, the hero of Homer's *Odyssey*. The German archaeologist Wilhelm Dörpfeld, having performed excavations at various locations of Lefkada, was able to obtain funding to do work on the island by suggesting that Lefkada was Homer's Ithaca, and the palace of Odysseus was located west of Nidri on the south coast of Lefkada. There have been suggestions by local tourism officials that several passages in the *Odyssey* point to Lefkada as a possible model for Homeric Ithaca. The most notable of these passages pushed by the local tourism board describes Ithaca as an island reachable on foot, which was the case for Lefkada since it is not really an island, that it was connected to the mainland by a narrow causeway. According to Strabo X,2 the coast of Acarnania was called Leucas in earlier times. The ancient sources call Leucas a Corinthian colony, perhaps with a Corcyraen participation.[3] During the Peloponnesian War Leucas had joined the Spartan Confederation.[4]

The Ottomans called it "Ayamavra" (a rendering of the Greek *Αγία Μαύρα*, the island's medieval name), and ruled it between 1479–1502, 1504–1684 and 1715-1716.

The east coast section of the island has the small resorts of Lygia, Nikiana and Perigiali, all north of Nidri, the largest resort on the island. Nidri is set in a sheltered location with views across to Skorpios - owned by Aristotle Onassis, Meganisi and other small islands, as well as the Greek mainland. The main coastal road from Lefkada to Vasiliki runs through the village, although a bypass has now been completed which skirts the village to the west. There are regular car ferries to Cephalonia, Ithaca and Meganissi.

Twenty kilometres south of Nidri is the resort of Vasiliki, a windsurfing center. There are ferries to Cephalonia and Ithaca from Vasiliki. South of Vasiliki is Cape Lefkada, where the Greek female poet Sappho allegedly leapt to her death from the 30 metre high cliffs.

The famous beach of Porto Katsiki is located on Lefkada's west coast. Lefkada was attached to mainland Greece (see above about Homer's Ithaca being Lefkada). The Corinthians dug a trench in the 7th century BC on its isthmus.[7]

### **Climate**

The island has a typical Mediterranean climate: hot summers and cool winters, especially in the mountains.