



Zakynthos

Shipwreck Beach...in the 70's a Greek freighter carrying contraband Turkish cigarettes went aground in bad weather giving Zakynthos its most photographed site. Seen from a small balcony perched on the cliff edge! Zakynthos (or Zante) is an island of outstanding natural beauty with dazzling emerald mountains of pine and rugged coasts of long sandy beaches. Miles of silvery olive groves...and, depressingly, in places miles of the very worst package tourism development of the 60's. Tacky pubs, garish neon signs and fake everything...how could they do it? We headed away from it and found some lovely spots in the countryside.

We have never seen such a dramatic or huge waterspout Extremely dangerous at sea. Below-protecting a turtle's nest.



It is also home to the "Caretta caretta" (loggerhead turtle), one of Europe's most endangered species. In the Bay of Laguna here is found the largest density of nests, 800-1000. Although it is a National Marine Park, dozens of glass-bottom boats with hundreds of tourists chase them around the bay. The nesting beaches are off limits between dusk and dawn during breeding season. After laying approx. 120 eggs, the female returns to sea, leaving the eggs to hatch 60 days later. I had imagined hundreds of tiny turtles scurrying down the sands. I always fall for it. But we had a nice day out and Jan had fun trying to get on board a boat of Russian daytrippers from a floating platform in heaving surf with only one crutch, the other having slid overboard on Havana on approach to Zakynthos harbour!



Zakynthos Town- recreated after the devastating earthquake of 1953- is a beautiful mixture of pastel-coloured neo-classical buildings and arcaded squares. Very lovely, much more Italian than greek. A Venetian fortress provides an attractive backdrop and stunning views over the town. We managed to lay alongside, right in the centre but had to barricade the sides of the boat with mattresses to stop Tuck hopping over and taking himself for a walk through the murderous traffic!



Right- 7 litres of pure, cold-pressed, virgin olive oil straight from the groves!



After 4 days exploring Zakynthos, we headed up to the Ionian to Prevesa via Lefkas under pressure to get Havana prepared and packed up for winter, expecting guests again on Leros. Jan travelled back to Leros to pick up our Jimny jeep and Tuck and I packed and cleaned up, staying at a little pension. Finally we left Havana in a torrential thunderstorm...a sure sign of Autumn in the Ionian. We had planned a 4 day trip by jeep through the Peloponnese which we had never visited and down to the Mani.