

HELLO!

LUXME Costa Botanica: A slice of paradise on the verdant isle of Corfu

The Ionian island is beloved by King
Charles



Widely regarded as the greenest Greek island, Corfu is a verdant paradise, known for its rich history and rugged coastal scenery. Aside from being a popular tourist destination, it also holds a special place in the hearts of British royals thanks to deep-rooted family ties.

Indeed, the late Queen Elizabeth II's husband, formerly known as Prince Philip of Greece and Denmark, was born on the island of Corfu in 1921.

Following a period of political instability, Philip and his family were evacuated from the island in December 1922.

The 'Emerald Island' remains a popular getaway of choice for King Charles and Queen Camilla, who have been spotted on the island's sandy shores while reportedly staying at the Rothschild Villa in Kerasia.

For anyone lusting after their very own Corfiot getaway steeped in luxury, Grecotel's LUXME Costa Botanica might just be the answer. Keep scrolling to discover more about the all-inclusive resort...

A slice of luxury

The hotel belongs to Grecotel's LUXME collection: a group of seven hotels boasting seafront locations, luxurious comfort, wellness, exceptional dining and tailored activities.

Their Corfu outpost notably combines Greek tradition with modernity, offering guests the very best of both worlds.



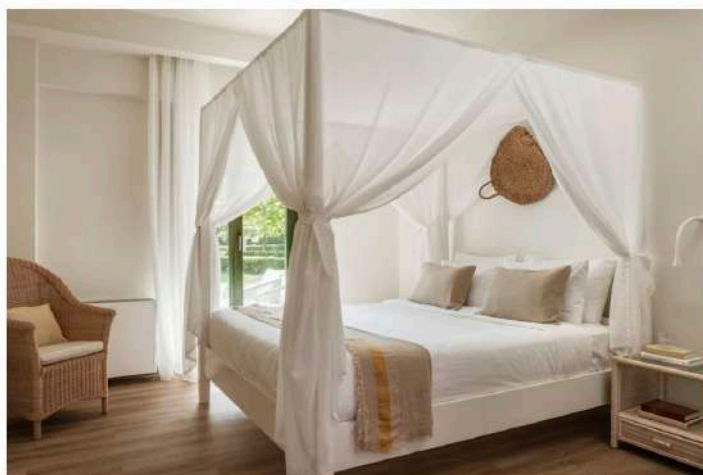
The sparkling Ionian sea lies just beyond the hotel

In terms of location, the property is perched on the island's rugged north coast, close to the village of Acharavi. One of the resort's greatest selling points is its unrivalled proximity to the glittering Ionian Sea.

Even from the furthest rooms, it's just a short hop, skip and jump to the 1,000-metre-long natural beach.

There are two room styles at the resort: The 'country houses', which have more of a rustic, traditional touch, and the 'summer houses', which feel a touch more luxurious and modern.

Despite catering up to a maximum of 1,250 guests, LUXME Costa Botanica's clever villa-style rooms ensure that the hotel never feels overcrowded.



The Summer Houses exude quiet luxury

I stayed in one of their 'family summer homes', which featured a double room, a twin room, a private balcony area and two bathrooms decked out with rainfall showers.

The aesthetic is simple yet stylish, with a sprinkling of rustic additions such as wicker artwork and glass vases.

Expect all the usual trappings of a five-star hotel, including a mini bar, daily fruit platters, a safe, dressing gown and slippers and a nightly turn-down service.



Guests can recharge and unwind in the beautifully serene spa

When it comes to amenities, LUXME Costa Botanica is an idyllic playground for both adults and children alike. Geared towards families, the resort boasts three outdoor swimming pools, a state-of-the-art spa (I can vouch for their Ionian Citrus Treatment), a kids club, a gym (complete with a boxing ring and reformer pilates machines), padel and tennis courts, and an aqua park dotted with multiple slides and a lazy river. Bliss.

The staff are warm and friendly, offering an exceptional level of service.

Wining and dining

With wellbeing at its core, LUXME Costa Botanica certainly delivers on the food front. Taking inspiration from traditional Corfiot towns, the resort boasts an impressive main square akin to Rome's Piazza Popolare.

It's a vibrant hub of activity and is home to four impressive restaurants offering up a smorgasbord of culinary delights from Greece, Italy, Asia and beyond.



The fine dining restaurant is located outside in the hotel's 'piazza'

The jewel in the crown is The Botanika: the hotel's fine dining flagship restaurant. Think elevated, seasonal dishes jam-packed with delicious local produce. The chic spot now also features a new 'lobsteria' to satisfy all your lobster cravings.

There is also a Mediterranean buffet restaurant teeming with an array of cuisines to please even the most discerning of guests.

Breakfast options include every style of yoghurt you could possibly imagine, fresh fruit, eggs in all their guises, pastries, meats, cheeses and pancakes. Lunch is a similar affair with a plethora of salads, cheeses, meats and hot dishes reigning supreme.



The buffet restaurant is a rustic dream

Oenophiles will be delighted to hear that the hotel also boasts its very own wine cellar called Cava Bottega di Vino. The hotel's only sommelier runs a wine-tasting experience, offering an introduction to the wines of Greece, in addition to more local wines from the island.

Expect to sample three different styles of wine, accompanied by a selection of moreish cheeses and fruits.

Nearby adventures

LUXME Costa Botanica does its best to ensure that visitors get the ultimate Corfiot experience during their stay on the island. For those looking to adventure beyond the hotel, an array of activities and experiences can be arranged.

Pining for a slice of Corfu's breathtaking natural scenery? Jump on board the Jeep safari tour of north Corfu.



Run by X Adventure Club, the tour (€110 per person), lasts approximately six hours and takes guests on a picturesque journey around some of the island's gems, including Sven's house in The Durrells, Corfu Beer's microbrewery in Arillas, Enotis (a family-run olive oil grove and museum), lunch at a cliffside restaurant overlooking Arillas Bay, and a glimpse of Cape Drastis in all its jagged glory.



The Palace of St Michael and St George in Corfu Old Town

For a dose of culture, don't miss the chance to explore Corfu's charming Old Town. We meandered through the web of narrow streets with an expert tour guide from Corfu Walking & Food Tours.

Armed with a bounty of local knowledge, Nausica taught us about the island's history under Venetian, French and British rule.

We marvelled at the Old Fortress, paid a visit to the Holy Church of Saint Spyridon and sussed out some of the city's quaintest corners.



A view of Corfu Old Town from the Old Fortress

Wholesome activities

But there's also plenty to do right at the heart of the resort. Yogi aficionados will be pleased to hear that the hotel offers daily beach flow yoga classes, with sessions in the morning and evening.

I tried the morning session with the lovely Dina who guided us through a meditative, stretchy flow, all set against the backdrop of rolling waves. I'm convinced there's no better way to start the day.



Sample some of Corfu's local delicacies in the traditional cooking class

If cooking is your jam, try your hands at the traditional Corfiot cooking class which spotlights the very best of Corfu's local produce.

Under the watchful eye of three chefs, you'll be taught how to whip up three dishes: Dakos (a barley rusk topped with grated tomato and feta), pastitsada, (cinnamon chicken stew served with pasta), and Loukomades, (fried honey puffs), which are traditionally served with swirls of honey and a sprinkling of nuts.

For something slightly different, guests can also visit Danilia Village: a unique replica of a traditional Corfiot village, complete with cobblestone streets illuminated by strings of lights.



The spot was famously used as a film set for James Bond thriller *For Your Eyes Only*, in addition to the popular TV series, *The Durrells*, and hit rom-com, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*.

It was purchased by Grecotel who then devised the Danilia Culinary Experience for its hotel guests. While it's a bit of a drive from the hotel, the wonderful set menu of traditional Greek food is well worth the journey. Expect to feast on dakos, stuffed vegetables, farmer's salad, stuffed vine leaves, pastitsada, roasted meats, baked fish and moussaka.

Rates from: £306 for a **Botanica Room** with a Private Balcony.