

# GUIDE TO SPOTTING AT CORFU AIRPORT



## Introduction

Corfù "Ioannis Kapodistrias" International Airport (ICAO code LGKR, IATA code CFU) is a medium size facility located close to the island's capital, Corfù city. It's particularly interesting characteristic is it's position which lies between the sea and an artificial lake: the runway is almost completely surrounded by water. On the eastern side of the single runway (35/17) is the village of Kanoni, built around one hundred meters higher than the runway on the peninsula of the same name. Thanks to this geological feature, Corfù airport has become an 'eldorado' for the spotter, enabling aircraft photography from a close location against spectacular backdrops.

## The traffic

Traffic at Corfù is mainly seasonal. In the main, between May and October the airport attracts all the major European charter operators, several companies from the East and Russia, and a good number of business jets. The busiest days are over the weekend, between Friday and Monday. The rest of the week is quieter, allowing, if desired, some relaxation on the beach, a visit to the characteristic city center of Corfù, or the remainder of the island. The only scheduled services are flown by Olympic and Aegean, which provide daily links from the island to the capital Athens, and Thessaloniki.

## Procedures

As the wind is almost always calm or of moderate speed, airport operations are extremely variable, and depend on the requirements of each individual aircraft. Nevertheless, thanks to the strategic position it is impossible to miss the transit of a single aircraft, and a scanner here is less of an essential tool, but more of an optional luxury, enabling even better following of the action. Landing aircraft mainly opt for runway 35 (the runway with the approach lights positioned in the water and the characteristic turning circle on the threshold). Departures, however, are often made from runway 17. The reasons are varied: the aircraft can quickly turn for home (Northern Europe), saving fuel; low level overflight of the city is avoided, and more runway length can be utilised during the take-off roll, particularly for aircraft at maximum all-up-weight. There are, however, numerous take-offs from 35. In this case the aircraft backtrack the runway (as there is no parallel taxiway) and turn around on the turning circle, which is in practice at the 35 threshold.



LANDING FOR RWY 35



TAKE-OFF FOR RWY 17



BACKTRACK RWY 35



LANDING FOR RWY 35

## Where to photograph

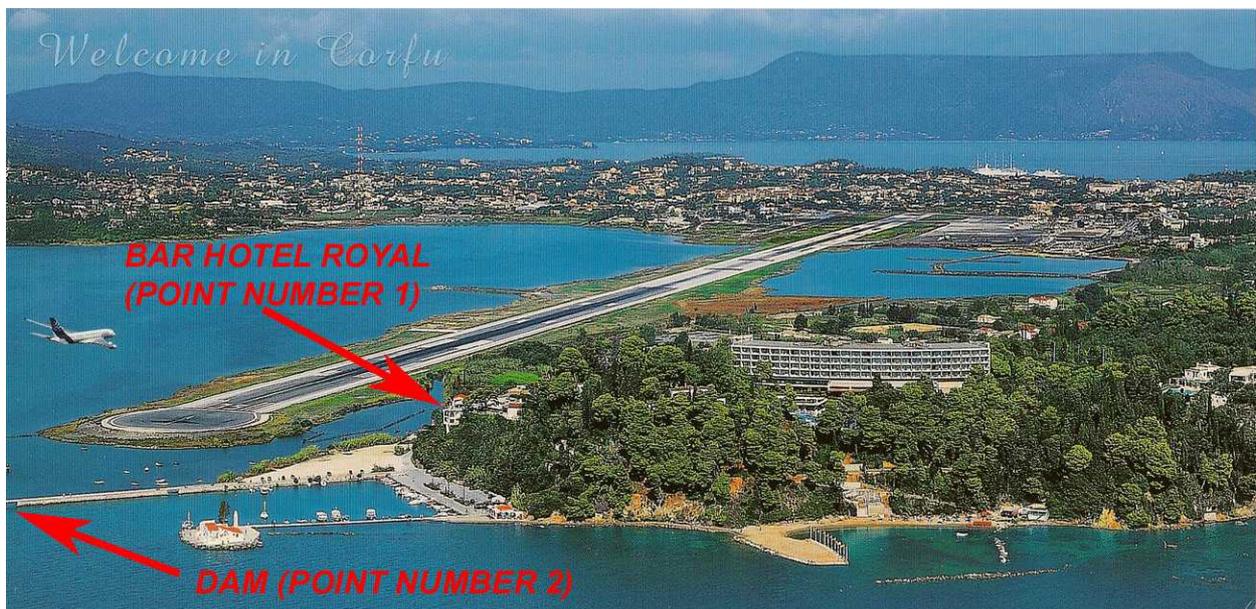
The best position for photography (from eight in the morning until around two in the afternoon) is the terrace of the bar of the Royal Hotel (Point Number 1). Non-residents can visit the bar, which is open to all from 0930. The aircraft can be easily photographed from a seat in the shade while sipping a cool drink.



From here, landings on 35, take-offs from 17, and, obviously, given the backtrack, 35, can be photographed. A good 80 - 200mm zoom is sufficient for any of these shots. During my stay in Corfù I used this almost all the time. The marvelous panorama attracts continuous visits from tourists coming from all over the island. The Hotel is well appointed with two bar-restaurants and a souvenir shop. From here can be seen the two small islands, Vlacherna, with the similarly named monastery dedicated to the Madonna, and Pontikonisi. This panorama has become the official logo of Corfù.



If some more specialist photography is required, it is possible to descend to the level of runway via a stairway which runs down towards the Vlacherna monastery of the Madonna. From here one can pick up a path that crosses the narrow dam (the path is open only to walkers and motorcyclists) which separates the sea from the artificial lagoon. Exactly in the middle of the dam (Point Number 2) it is possible, to photograph, with a medium zoom lens, take-offs and landings.





If all this is not enough, in the afternoon it is possible to reach, at the end of the dam, a small open beach (Point Number 3). From here, while taking the sun, it is possible to photograph the traffic until the evening, cooling off, from time to time, with a dip in the sea. As it is close to the approach lights, photography from this spot require a short 28 - 70 mm zoom.



### Where to stay

There are various hotel possibilities close to Point Number 1, mainly in the area of Kanoni. Low down, with windows that practically overlook the threshold, is the Pension "Anna Bouzi". Higher up, in a more favourable position, is the Hotel Royal. Although an aging structure, it is, however, clean, and offers photography from your own balcony (ask for a room with a lake view). In the immediate vicinity there is also the Hotel Corfù Holiday Palace. I opted for this one. A grand and modern building, it is fitted with every comfort (tennis courts, indoor and outdoor pools, shops, bowling), and even houses the sole (but exceptionally bust) casino on the island. It offer half-board accommodation, with excellent buffets for breakfast and dinner. Here also it is possible to obtain, on request, rooms with views over the lake, from which (from the seventh floor) can be seen the majority of the runway, the entire terminal, and even views over the city of Corfù and its port. The rooms are spacious and air-conditioned, with minibar, satellite TV and telephones. The terrace is wide and comfortable.



  
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### Where to eat

At lunchtime, and also at dinner, I would advise selecting some local Greek dishes at the "Captain George" Taverna. Practically outside the entrance to the Hotel Corfu Holiday Palace, in Nausicas Street, around 150 meters from the panoramic photo point you can find this typical family-run restaurant. Mr. George - sorry, Captain George - always with a smile on his lips, advises on the menu and, aided by his wife and children, serves excellent dishes at truly moderate prices. Unmissable choices must be the taramosalata (a cod roe paste), tzatziki (yoghurt, garlic and cucumber), pastitsada (chicken in tomato sauce served on a bed of pasta), chicken kebabs, but also brill baked in foil and grilled sardines. Good appetite !





**FAMILY RESTAURANT - BAR**

**CAPTAIN GEORGE**  
SINCE 1983

**ΟΙΚΟΓΕΝΕΙΑΚΗ ΤΑΒΕΡΝΑ**

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Μια ανάσα από την μαγευτική θέα του Κανονιού βρίσκεται από το 1983 η οικογενειακή μας ταβέρνα. **Κερκυραϊκές γεύσεις, κατσαρόλας, φρέσκα ψάρια, ελαφριά γεύματα και δροσερά ποτά στην βεράντα μας.**  
(Μενού σε 16 γλώσσες)



Just a few meters away from the magic view of Kanoni, you will find our Family Taverna with **Corfu specialities, fresh fish, light meals and cool drinks on our veranda.**  
(Menu in 16 languages)

### What to see

It is obligatory to dedicate an entire day to visiting the city of Corfu, with its numerous breathtaking photo opportunities. Unmissable are Spianada, the Liston, the Old and New fortresses, and the church of Saint Spiridione. Those interested in antiquities can visit the archaeological museum and the Byzantine museum.

### Souvenir

No-one should return home without a selection of candied Kumquat (the small Chinese oranges cultivated only here and in Sicily), and a small bottle of the liquor made from the same source. Many shops sell icons, both new and old. A Komboloi, a traditional Greek game to pass away the hours, should also accompany you on your flight home.

**DIEGO BIGOLIN**

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