

## Travel Tips To Greece

*Welcome to Wonderful Greece, "there is no place on earth like Greece."*

**Location** : Greece is located in the south east Mediterranean with the neighbouring countries of Italy to the west and Turkey to the east.. Greece, with its varied landscape, is famous for its islands, there are some 2,000 islands belonging to Greece although not all of them are inhabited.



Distances Km	Athens	Agrinio	Alexandroupoli	Argos	Edessa	Thessalonica	Kavala	Corinth	Larnia	Larissa	Patra	Sparti	Trikala	Halkidiki
Athens (ATH)		290	850	133	535	520	685	82	220	335	220	255	340	88
Agrinio (AG)	290		870	260	510	535	700	205	265	380	84	340	320	340
Alex/poli (AP)	850	870		930	420	330	170	880	630	515	830	1050	580	795
Argos (AR)	133	260	930		615	595	760	51	295	410	190	123	415	190
Edessa (ED)	535	510	420	615		88	250	560	315	200	515	735	255	480
Thessalonica (TH)	520	535	330	595	88		165	545	300	185	500	720	245	460
Kavala (KV)	685	700	170	760	250	165		710	465	350	660	885	410	625
Corinth (KO)	82	205	880	51	560	545	710		245	360	139	175	365	140
Lamia (LM)	220	265	630	295	315	300	465	245		114	200	420	118	165
Larissa (LA)	335	380	515	410	200	185	350	360	114		310	535	61	280
Patra (PA)	220	84	830	190	515	500	660	139	200	310		255	315	270
Sparti (SP)	255	340	1050	123	735	720	885	175	420	535	255		540	415
Trikala (TK)	340	320	580	415	255	245	410	265	118	61	315	540		280
Halkida (HA)	88	340	795	190	480	460	625	140	165	280	270	415	280	

**Capital** : The capital city is Athens.

**Population** : 11.1 million (National Statistical Service of Greece, 2005).

**Religion** : The Greek population is 90% Christian Greek Orthodox. The remaining 10% are mainly Christian Catholics and other sects and Muslims.

**Local time**: Greece is 2 hours ahead of GMT

**Language** : Greek (the mother tongue of the western languages) is the common spoken language but, English is widely spoken as well as other European languages. All street directions are in Greek and English.

**Currency** : Currency is Euro. The Euro € is in note and coins form. The denominations of the coins are 1, 2 € and 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 cents. The notes are in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 €.

**Currency Exchange** :

Foreign currency can be exchanged at all banks, savings banks and bureaux de change. Exchange rates can fluctuate from one bank to another. Check with banks for details and current rates.

**Credit / Debit Cards and ATMs** :

American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard, Visa and other major credit cards are widely accepted

**Banking Hours** :

Mon-Thurs 0800-1430, Fri 0800-1400. Banks on the larger islands tend to stay open in the afternoon and some during the evening to offer currency exchange facilities during the tourist season.

**Communication** :

**Telephone**

Country code: 30, followed by (210) for Athens, (2310) for Thessaloniki and (2810) for Heraklion (all area codes are prefixed with 2 and end with 0).

**Mobile Telephone**

Roaming agreements exist with most international mobile phone companies. Coverage is excellent.

**Internet**

Internet cafes are available in the main cities, including Athens, Thessaloniki and the islands Crete, Kos, Mykonos and Rhodes.

**Travel documents** : An International passport, which should be valid for at least 6 months, is required for immigration at the airport and for hotel procedures.

**Travel insurance** : Travel Insurance is strongly recommended for any possible loss or, damage to your luggage, medical emergencies and some travel related accidents. Consult your travel agent before departing.

**National holidays** : Jan 1, Jan 6, March 25, Greek Easter, May 1, August 15, October 28, December 25, December 26.

**Major Tourist Places** :

Athens, Cape Sounio, Delphi, Mount Parnassus, Nafplio, Mycenae, Corinth Epidaurus, Patras, Olympia, Saronic Islands Aegina, Poros, Hydra

**Islands**: Mykonos Santorini Skiathos Skopelos Rhodes Crete

**Weather / Climate** : Greece's climate shows similarity in Spring (March - May) and in Fall (September - November) In both seasons, you may encounter rain, which happens very rarely, more than likely, it will be sunny although the nights may be a little chilly. In Summer, (June - August), the weather is warm and sunny with the nights being cooler. In Winter, (December - February) the weather is most often cold and you may experience rarely snow besides rain. Most of the country's tourist infrastructure goes into hibernation during winter, particularly on the islands. Some of the smaller islands close completely. Many hotels, seasonal cafés and restaurants close their doors from the end of November until the beginning of April; bus and ferry services are either drastically reduced or cancelled.

**Average Temperatures:**

<u>Months</u>	<u>Athens &amp; Southern Greece</u>	<u>Thessaloniki &amp; Northern Greece</u>
January	52° F - 12° C	45° F - 8° C
February	54° F - 13° C	51° F - 11° C
March	58° F - 15° C	54° F - 13° C
April	65° F - 19° C	65° F - 19° C
May	74° F - 24° C	74° F - 24° C
June	86° F - 30° C	86° F - 30° C
July	92° F - 33° C	90° F - 32° C
August	92° F - 33° C	90° F - 32° C
September	82° F - 28° C	80° F - 27° C
October	72° F - 23° C	69° F - 21° C
November	63° F - 18° C	58° F - 15° C
December	56° F - 14° C	50° F - 10° C

**Local transportation** : Greece has a good and fairly inexpensive transportation system. Taxi, Bus, Trolley, Bus and, in Athens, Metro (Underground). There is a good national bus network from major cities to all parts of Greece.

**Boat - ferry transportation:** Piraeus, the port of Athens is the place to take your ferry to all the Greek islands. There are ferries to all islands every day. Ferries offer, tourist class and first class and cabins on the overnight journeys.

**Electric current** : 220 volts and 50 Hertz with round-prong European style plugs for domestic use. If not , will require an adaptor.

**Valuables** : We strongly advise you to keep all valuables in the safety boxes provided at the Reception desk. Never leave them unattended in your room or cabin. This includes Travelers Cheques, cash, credit cards, passport and your air ticket which should be retained for departure. The hotels accept no responsibility for the loss or damage of any valuables left unattended.

**Tipping** : If you are happy with the service in your restaurant, taxi, hotel or any other service, a tip of 10-15% is an appropriate way to show your appreciation.

**Health tips** : Tap water is drinkable throughout Greece although, bottled mineral water is also available everywhere. Restaurant food is generally safe to eat.

**What to wear**

- In Spring and Fall, a jacket and sweater will keep you comfortable.
- In winter, it is advisable to have with you warmed light clothing and waterproofs.
- In summer, you may only require T-shirts, light trousers and shorts.
- Bring sunglasses and a hat and, if you are sensitive to the sun, bring a good sun block lotion.

- A good comfortable pair of walking shoes is essential.
- When visiting religious sites, such as churches, it is important not to wear shorts. For women, covering the shoulders is also required.
- Bring swimming gear for the beach, the hotels swimming pool or spas.

### **Things to carry**

- Wet Tissues • Camera/Video camera • Water bottles
- Some tidbits especially for kids like Waffers, Choclates, candies, Biscuits etc
- Few dry eatables such as Farsan, Thepla, Khakhra, Dry fruits.etc
- Take things to keep the children entertained at the airport and on the flight. Books, paper, pens, travel games, packs of cards - anything that will keep them occupied. If possible take an old favorite and something new as a surprise.
- Make a small “**medical-kit**” before you go! Include things like safety pins, plasters (different sizes), antiseptic cream, Tablets for diarrhea, nausea, headache cold, fever travel sickness pills, insect repellent Etc . If you take prescribed medicine make sure that you take enough for your stay in Greece.
- **And if you are planning to hire a car your driving license.**

**Shopping in Athens** : One of the most attractive areas for shopping in Athens is around Syntagma (Parliament square), Kolonaki, Ermou st. and Plaka, Which are open Tue, Thu, Fri 09.00-21.00, Mon, Wed, Sat 09.00-17.00 The shops in Plaka are open every day of the week including Sundays from morning until late at night.

Unusual gold and silver jewelry, inspired both by classical and Byzantine motifs

Museum shops offer high quality reproductions of works that they exhibit. In addition, artwork by contemporary artists is also available in the galleries of Psyri and Gazi. Local handicrafts include multicolored, woven rugs (made and sold in Arahova and Delphi), painted icons and religious artifacts ( Meteora), natural sponges and shells.

**Local delicacies** : The food served in restaurants is international but, there is a large variety of taverns offering different and varied Greek cuisine. Restaurant and taverna food tends to be very simple, rarely involving sauces but with full use of local olive oil and charcoal grills. However, Athens and some of the more fashionable islands such as Santorini and Mykonos have seen the arrival of fusion international dishes. Hours are normally 1200-1500 for lunch and 2000-2400 for dinner.

- **Local delicacies** like the philo, walnut and honey sweets, baklava and kataifi, and loukoumi (also known as Turkish delights) make good gifts to take back home.
- Greek olive oil is world famous for its purity and flavor
- The island of Chios is famous for its gum trees. Natural mastic gum is known for its healing properties. Take home a bag full of natural chewing gum as well as some mastic-flavored candy!

### **National specialties:**

- Dolmades (stuffed vine leaves).
- Moussaka (aubergine casserole with minced lamb, cinnamon, red wine and olive oil).
- Squid (kalamari) or octopus (htapodia).
- Souvlaki (spit-roasted meat, generally pork or chicken).
- Horiatiki (Greek salad: feta cheese, tomato, cucumber and fresh olive oil).

### **National drinks:**

- Retsina (wine made with pine-needle resin).
- Ouzo (an aniseed-based clear spirit to which water is added)
- Raki (a sharp and fiery spirit made from distilled grapes).
- Greek coffee (thick and strong, and sugared according to taste).
- Greek beer is a light Pilsner type.