



Northern Greece

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Why Go?

The vast and varied northern Greece (βόρεια Ελλάδα) area is unmatched for geographical, cultural and even gustatory diversity. Comprising terrain stretching from the azure Ionian Sea across the rugged Epirot mountains, through Macedonia's lakes and vineyards and across the Thracian plain to the Turkish border, the north offers something for everyone.

Although the region has only been part of Greece since the Balkans were carved up in the 1912–13 Balkan Wars, it's hardly a young territory: Macedonians, Illyrians, Thracians and Romans all ruled in ancient times, while the Byzantines, Slavs and Turks later held sway for lengthy periods.

Today, northern Greece is becoming a pretty happening place. Thessaloniki, Greece's second city, offers outstanding eateries, nightlife and culture, while Epirot university town Ioannina is a lively spot close to the magnificent Pindos Mountains. Northern Greece even boasts great beaches – both for those seeking summer nightlife and for others looking for more secluded spots.

Best Places to Eat

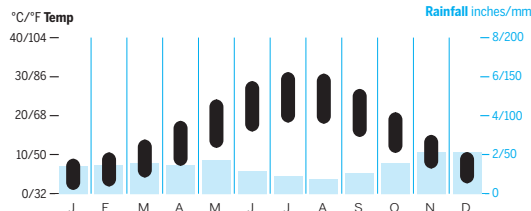
- » Paparouna (p255)
- » Castello Restaurant (p316)
- » Flegra Traditional Taverna (p265)
- » Gastrodromio (p276)
- » Clochard (p266)

Best Places to Stay

- » Daios (p254)
- » Arhontiko Dilofo (p311)
- » Imaret (p272)
- » Rent Rooms Thessaloniki (p254)

When to Go

Thessaloniki



Jun-Aug Cool off during high summer on the beaches of Halkidiki, and around Parga.

Sep-Nov School's back in Thessaloniki, and there's a season of music, film fests, exhibits and nightlife.

Dec-Mar Enjoy a ski-lodge glow in Zagorohoria villages or Christmas on Mt Athos with the monks.



Northern Greece Highlights

- 1 Marvel at archaeological and Byzantine museums in **Thessaloniki** (p253)
- 2 Be at one with the gods atop famed **Mt Olympus** (p276)
- 3 Soak up the sun on the beaches ringing **Parga** (p314)
- 4 Indulge in eastern-flavoured traditional dishes and sweets in **Xanthi** (p290)
- 5 Turn your binoculars on the circling vultures and hawks at Thrace's **Dadia Forest Reserve** (p296)
- 6 Have fun in **Ioannina** (p302), a student city known for its history and fine silver
- 7 Snorkel in pristine Aegean waters around uninhabited islets off the **Halkidiki Peninsula** (p264)
- 8 Hike one of Europe's grandest canyons, the **Vikos**
- 9 Contemplate the stillness of **Mikri Prespa** (p282) lake from the expansive basilica ruins of **Agros Athleios**
- 10 Gorge (p310), in Epiros' Zagorioria region